

Nat Hentoff, Sally Quinn, Richard Reeves and Mike Wallace on  
**Getting Answers To Tough Questions**

75¢

**(MORE)**

**Roger Wilkins On  
White Fantasies**

**An 'All-American' Crime**

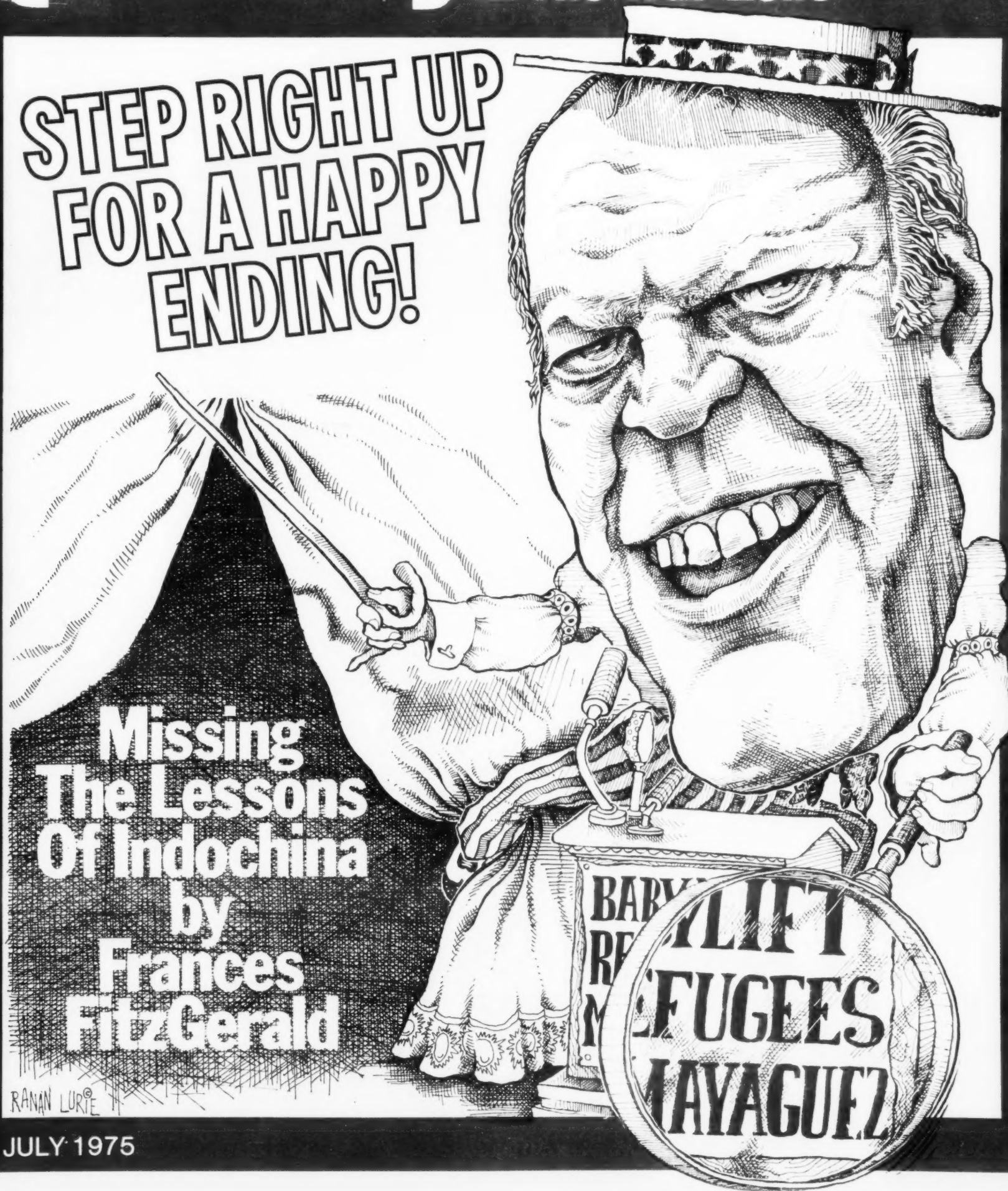
**Hunter Thompson  
In The War Zone**

**STEP RIGHT UP  
FOR A HAPPY  
ENDING!**

**Missing  
The Lessons  
Of Indochina  
by  
Frances  
FitzGerald**

RANAN LURIE

JULY 1975



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Cover Drawing by Ranan Lurie

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JULY 1975

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# LETTERS

## Eighth Lesson

I would like to see [MORE] criticize rock journalism, but Deanne Stillman's "How to Become a Rock Critic in 7 Easy Lessons" [May 1975] was not the way to begin. Stillman focuses on the rock critic's lousy writing, blaming individual writers for the cuteness, gimmickry and gossip that dominates rock journalism.

Rock writers are not the problem. There are reasons for rock journalism's shallow reporting, and [MORE] should be investigating that—not wasting time on rock critics' style of writing. [MORE] should ask, "Who does the rock press serve—the rock audience or the rock industry?"

Don't blame the people and the writers for fluffy journalism. Fluff serves those who want the majority of us diverted from what's really going on in our world.

—Barbara Zheutlin  
Venice, Calif.

## That's Entertainment

Congratulations on the Garry Wills piece, which very usefully reminds us that there is another world out there ["What's Wrong With This Magazine"—June 1975]. But that other world, on his showing, is principally a world of entertainment and not of news and communication, which may be why viewers of television—which is almost entirely entertainment—resent the intrusion of the network "news" programs every evening.

—Snowden T. Herrick  
New York, N.Y.

## Touchdown!

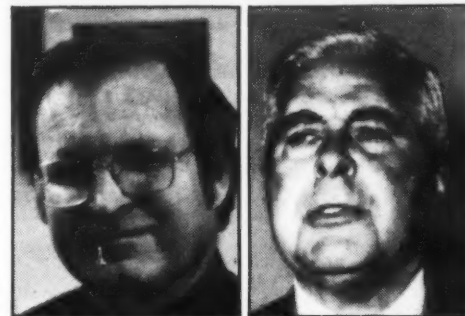
Reading the subtle, sophisticated wit and wisdom of Joseph Roddy ["Notes on 'The Biggest Bankroll' Theory"—May 1975] was the best thing that has happened since the Super Bowl.

—Ed Kiely  
Pittsburgh Steelers  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## Great Caesar's Ghost

I don't know how Superman flies [Hellbox—June 1975], but I can assure you Perry White is alive and well and editing Grandfield's community weekly newspaper, *The Big Pasture News*. I've been editor and publisher of this little community publication for more than 21 years and occasionally get some fun out of the Perry White character in Superman.

Over the years I've had an invitation to receive red carpet treatment at the Bell-McClure Syndicate offices in New York, at the Superman museum in Metropolis, Illin-



The Real Perry White (left) and poseur.

ois, and even once received a fan letter from a youngster living in England who was a Superman follower . . .

—The Real Perry White  
Grandfield, Okla.

## Meat and Potatoes?

"The Gravy Train"—the sidebar to "Douglass Cater's Secret Mission" [June 1975]—implies that all foundation grants for media research are boondoggles. Such antediluvian anti-intellectualism camouflages some important truths about media research.

First, there are few foundations willing to fund press studies. Two-thirds of the grants you listed were made by two small foundations (Markle and Twentieth Century Fund) that are more adventuresome than most. There is a need for more foundation interest in the media, not less.

Second, media research has its share of failures. But some failures are occurring for the right reasons. Researchers need to work at answering the hard questions—about the quality of the wire services, the impact of concentrated ownership, and the effect of federal regulation on the electronic media—not the easy ones. The so-called failures are often more important to journalism than the successes that tell us everything about nothing.

Third, much media research—press evaluation, for example—requires more thought and more knowledge and more money than it has received. As Garry Wills suggested in "What's Wrong With This Magazine" [June 1975], your own attempt at press evaluation, "The 10 Worst" [May 1974], could have benefitted from a better understanding of the press and the application of more sophisticated standards of evaluation. Our New England Daily Newspaper Survey—for which the Markle Foundation gave \$76,252, not \$45,252 as you reported—could have been better.

But progress will only occur when individuals undertake—and foundations adequately fund—systematic evaluations of the press. I suspect the same is true in many areas of media research.

—Loren Ghiglione  
Editor and Publisher  
*The Evening News*  
Southbridge, Mass.

## Corrections

In "The Gravy Train" [June 1975], we incorrectly quoted the 1973 annual report of The Twentieth Century Fund as saying that Lawrence Grauman, Jr. had been given a grant to study the problems of literary magazines in 1972. The study was to be completed in 1972. The scope of the project was not limited to that one year but included a broad cultural, political and economic examination of the difficulties faced by literary, avant garde and underground publications as far back as 1945.

I was very surprised to see my news study among those listed in "The Gravy Train" as examples of media research "boondoggles." This was the only sour note for me in an otherwise superb piece by Peter Schrag on Douglass Cater's "mountain top" and lesser heights of the Deep Think School of Journalism Research. Schrag did a fine service on an extremely difficult, sensitive subject. So did the cartoonist.

My modest study of the wire services and networks was far from a boondoggle. The amount involved—reported as \$24,625 by



[MORE] but actually more than double that if expenses were included—certainly could not be considered excessive for a serious study of the major news channels in this country. Indeed, from hindsight, I would say it was far too little for such a task.

I also take issue with the statement that after the Twentieth Century Fund decided not to publish the manuscript, it "surrendered all rights" to me. That is simply not true. Indeed, the Fund's policy in such cases illustrates yet another way in which foundations restrict rather than enhance circulation of controversial views and information. In his letter to me announcing the decision not to publish, M. J. Rossant, the Fund's director, stated the policy:

"I must remind you that the manuscript remains the property of the Twentieth Century Fund. If you succeed in revising it or in having it revised to the point of acceptability by a publisher, any agreement to publish should be made between the publisher and the Twentieth Century Fund, which must hold the copyright. Any and all royalties from such publication will accrue to the Twentieth Century Fund until the costs of the project have been repaid . . ." Such a policy leaves little incentive for further work. In fact, it changes nothing by leaving the decision to publish still with the Fund.

I must also strongly disagree with [MORE]'s implication that any study of the news media (except critical articles for [MORE]) is a boondoggle. For example, I would certainly not so classify the Fund's \$13,588 grant to study the effects of media monopolies on news content. There has long been a crying need for serious analysis of the basic news services and networks, especially their effect on news content and on events themselves. I believe that much, if not most, of our national problems in recent years have been caused or exacerbated by the way the major media have handled the news. These powerful and pervasive forces are essentially uncontrolled and unexamined by anyone, including themselves. Meanwhile, they show us their power to help lead us into war, out of war, into recessions, into Watergates and, somewhat belatedly, out of Watergates while maximizing every dollar of profit.

The truth is that they don't really know what they are doing to this country and the people in it. And they don't make much of an effort to find out. They don't try to compare their coverage with later knowledge of what actually happened. In fact, they have never made a serious effort to review their own standards of judging the news even while the rest of the world is being shaken almost off its hinges. And they have never met the standards of performance that they daily apply to all other institutions of society . . .

—Arthur E. Rowse  
Washington, D.C.

Peter Schrag's demolition of the Aspen Program was excellent. He provided rich detail that proved his point. But the list of alleged foundation grant "boondoggles" appended to it seemed gratuitous. You used a ploy perfected by glib congressmen looking to build reefs as waste-watchers:

A) Find some unexciting study topics; like, say, crab reproduction in Chesapeake Bay.

B) Strut onto the House floor and shake your head in wonder as you lament all that money being flushed on "investigating the sex life of crabs" and other follies.

Nice headline, but try telling the economists in some coastal states it isn't important that crabs get it on as often as possible.

That list contained some useful projects. Why make them all seem ludicrous?

—Rick Beaudette  
Washington, D.C.

(continued on page 23)

# ROSEBUDS

## Charity Begins At Home

**R**OSEBUDS to reporter Larry Brinton and the *Nashville Banner* for an exposé of mismanagement and corruption in Tennessee's United Cerebral Palsy organizations. Even in the wake of Watergate, the kind of hard digging and commitment of resources that characterized Brinton's series is only too rare, especially among smaller papers like the *Banner* (circ: 92,631). Even rarer is the kind of follow-up the *Banner* did in its 20-odd stories. Still rarer: concrete results. Brinton's series caused cancellation of this year's Middle Tennessee Cerebral Palsy Telethon, the firing of two of UCP's top officials and the resignation of its entire board of directors, the complete reorganization of the charity's fund-raising activities in the region, and two state criminal investigations into UCP's operations.

Brinton's original tip came ironically from the reporter the *Banner* sent out to do the annual "puff" piece on the telethon. When the reporter returned to do her story, she happened to mention that the woman who ran Tennessee's telethon every year had remarked to her that last year's event had made only \$700. That didn't sound right, she told another reporter, but wrote her story anyway. But the tip was passed on to top *Banner* reporter Brinton.

On Feb. 17, Brinton asked to see the books of both UCP-Mid Tennessee and UCP-Tennessee, the smaller, parent organization. Initially he got the run-around. When he finally got access to some of the records, they weren't always what he'd asked for. (When he asked to see complete payroll records, he got a few of the employees' W-2 forms.) But after a month of digging, even with limited access to incomplete records, Brinton could see a pattern of mismanagement and corruption. Among the facts he uncovered:

- During 1973-74, UCP of Mid-Tenn. spent \$129,724.91, which was \$47,784.67 more than its income, and although UCP said the 1974 Telethon had raised \$276,981, only about \$166,000 was ever collected.

- UCP had borrowed \$82,884.73 from national UCP, had failed to pay many of its debts, and often failed to pass on a percentage of its take to national UCP.

- Salaries of top UCP officials were actually far higher than publicly announced and inflated by lavish expense accounts and gifts for which bills were rarely presented, and several staff members had received salary advances which had never been repaid.

- Many of the claims made during the telethon were false, including the actual sums raised and that top-flight stars were donating their time for the cerebral palsy cause; instead, stars were often paid for appearances and lavishly entertained out of funds raised for the children.

- Both Tennessee UCP organizations had consistently failed to file complete information about the charity groups with federal, state and local authorities.

With one week to go before the annual star-studded telethon, Brinton's discoveries presented the *Banner* with a tough decision. Should the paper run the series before or after the telethon? "There was no question about running the series," says *Banner* publisher Wayne Sargent. "The question was timing."

But then something happened which offered a way out. The last of several meetings between UCP officials and the *Banner* team (publisher Sargent, Brinton, editor Ken Morrell and *Banner* lawyer and ex-Watergate prosecutor James F. Neal) was called March 10 to discuss Brinton's discoveries. Also at the meeting was Irving Waugh, president of WSM-TV, which traditionally donated free time for the telethon. Waugh left the meeting deeply troubled by unanswered questions. On March 13, Waugh announced the cancellation of the telethon.

So *Banner* readers first read about the UCP scandal in a front-page story by Brinton headed, WSM

Right: Reporter Larry Brinton of the *Nashville Banner*. Below: Mrs. Jean Stubbs and local TV personality Jack Smith at a Cerebral Palsy Telethon in Nashville. Stubbs, executive director of UCP of mid-Tenn. and UCP-Tenn., came under fire by the *Banner* for mismanagement of charity funds.



CANCELS CP TELETHON AFTER BANNER PROBE. The piece was the first of some 20 Brinton stories, most of them front-pagers, which were finally to dethrone UCP's top officials and the two groups' entire board of directors.

As noteworthy as the UCP series was the *Banner*'s scrutiny of itself. The media is an integral part of charity fund-raising extravaganzas in America; not surprisingly the *Banner* was involved, in the UCP scandal as well as the cause. Two stories resulted. One, on the front page, outlined how a *Banner* senior editor—coincidentally a close friend and collaborator of Brinton's—had taken regular cash payments from UCP. (UCP officials had reassured him no records were kept.) The editor admitted the money was probably designed to get favorable stories into the paper about UCP's efforts. He has since paid the money back. Another story noted that a *Banner* photographer had been paid \$600 for publicity photos for the telethon. "Nothing immoral there," says Brinton, "but we thought we'd better lay it all out."

*Banner* publisher Wayne Sargent agrees. "If the media is to earn the right to scrutinize others, we've got to live in the goldfish bowl, too," he says. When Sargent came in two years ago after Gannett bought the paper, he asked all his top staffers to give him a list of all their sources of outside income. (The senior editor left UCP off his list.) As a result of the UCP revelations, *Banner* employees are getting a letter from Sargent in their paychecks warning them against accepting "freebies" or other bribes.

—JUDITH COBURN

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# HELLBOX

## Continuing Sagas

A \$1.35 million out-of-court settlement in San Francisco has precluded a landmark decision on the legality of the Newspaper Preservation Act ["Nothing Succeeds Like Failure"—June 1975]. On May 23, four days before the historic trial was to begin, the morning *Chronicle* and the afternoon *Examiner* agreed to pay \$500,000 to the bi-monthly *Bay Guardian*, which spearheaded the lawsuit for five years. The \$850,000 balance will go to the now-defunct Weinstein Department Stores and more than a dozen other plaintiffs in five related areas.

The case was intended to test the local applicability of the act, which permits a so-called "failing newspaper" to share production facilities and combine advertising rates with the stronger paper in the same city. As in San Francisco, the usual result is higher advertising charges and the establishment of a local media monopoly. Such arrangements now exist in 22 other U.S. cities. The trial was also expected to provide a rare and enlightening look into the books of the Hearst Corporation, which owns the *Examiner*. As part of the settlement, however, the *Guardian* agreed to return the subpoenaed and sealed documents it had obtained from the two dailies.

Over the years, *Guardian* editor Bruce Bruggmann has repeatedly attacked the San Francisco monopoly in his pages, leading one letter-writer to suggest after the settlement: "Get off your high horse, Brucie. Hearst just bought the old nag." In an editorial explaining his decision, Bruggmann argued that it might be years until the case was ultimately resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court and a second trial held to establish damages. The case had already cost the money-losing *Guardian* \$25,000 and to continue the fight would cost at least that much more. With his \$300,000 share of the settlement (his two lawyers get \$200,000), Bruggmann plans to take the *Guardian* weekly in the fall.

So Hearst's books remain closed and the monopoly goes on doing business as usual. However, there is nothing to stop advertisers in San Francisco or elsewhere from filing similar suits. Indeed, one has already been filed in San Francisco and *Guardian* lawyer Stephen R. Barnett, a Berkeley law professor, says lawyers have been calling from other monopoly sites. "I'm really hopeful that this will be the beginning of litigation over monopolies in many cities," he says.

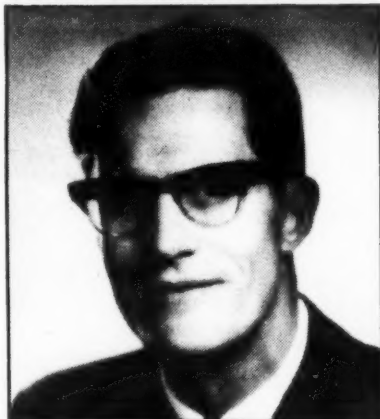
"We decided to settle the suit with great reluctance and after much consideration," Bruggmann wrote in the *Guardian*. "We still believe the *Examiner/Chronicle* joint operating agreement, which fixes advertising and circulation rates and pools profits, is illegal under the antitrust laws... We thought we could prove these things at trial, that we could break

up the monopoly and ultimately invalidate the 'Failing Newspaper Act.' But we found there's a limit to how far a small 'failing newspaper' like the *Guardian* can go in fighting an antitrust case of this magnitude." Stephen R. Barnett, one of Bruggmann's lawyers, cut to the heart of the matter: "If you make a lot of money—no matter how illegally—you can buy off the challenger."

## Death Warrant

On May 22, the Public Broadcasting System televised a well-received show on the funeral industry "Since the American Way of Death," which included charges of consumer fraud against morticians. The film was aired despite efforts of Joseph Coors, Denver beer man and nominee to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to stifle the show.

On Jan. 5, Francis S. VanDerbur, a Denver mortician, wrote to Coors



Joseph Coors

Wide World

saying that "thousands of honest hard-working people across the country can be subjected to a vicious attack if the Hirsh film [the film was produced by Michael Hirsh and WTTW, Chicago's educational station] is shown... I hope you will do what you can to stimulate investigation of this situation and I especially hope it is not accepted by our Chanel [sic] 6."

Five days later, Coors wrote to Henry Loomis, president of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which has great influence on the activities—and financing—of the PBS public TV network. Coors enclosed the letter from his "good friend in the mortuary business." He suggested it would be "unfortunate" for PBS to air an unfair film, and wrote: "I am not yet familiar enough with the interconnection between PBS and CPB to know whether you can do anything about this but it is the type of thing which I will be very interested in watching closely if I ever become confirmed on your fine board." Coors received a polite reply from Loomis. The program was aired nationwide May 22.

Coors, who started TVN, a television news service designed to provide a conservative "balance" to the news, has already encountered much opposition to his CPB nomination. His recent attempt to strongarm

## I Got The Horse Right Here

Trot fans would apparently do well to play the picks of *The Washington Post's* new handicapper. In a new approach to hiring, the newspaper's sports editors ran a four-week contest, ending in late May, to fill the job of harness handicapper. The editors selected from a pool of 71 applicants and gave each of the three finalists an imaginary \$1,000 with which to bet at Rosecroft Raceway in Oxon Hill, Md. The winner—whoever had the most "money" at the end of a month—was a 31-year-old Commerce Department engineer, who will earn \$2,500 for the part-time summer job of making predictions.



Marty Norman

The new tout, nicknamed "The Guru," picked 67 winners, cleared \$365 and bet over 5,000 imaginary dollars. Although he trailed early in the finalists' race behind two other government employees, the Guru caught up in the last three nights of the contest with 15 winning picks.

"I hope to be right about 40 per cent of the time," says the Guru, who won't reveal his name for fear of being deluged with tips and questions. He uses the drivers' zodiac signs to help pick winners and claims to have broken even in all his years of \$100-a-day betting. He has written handicap sheets for friends at various tracks along the East Coast.

The would-be handicappers answered a one-inch boxed ad that first appeared in the sports pages in March. One applicant offered to provide the sports editor with inside tips, another offered professional gamblers as references and a third noted that he had served time for bookmaking.

There's no word yet on whether aspiring stock market analysts or weather forecasters will have to go through a similar screening process.

—ARTHUR LEVINE

Loomis is expected to make his confirmation by the Senate even more difficult. As Robert A. Wilson, president of the Public Communication Foundation for North Texas, wrote to Loomis after the funeral show exchange, Coors's "lack of sensitivity should certainly provide a sufficient tip-off that he doesn't understand either public broadcasting or journalism."

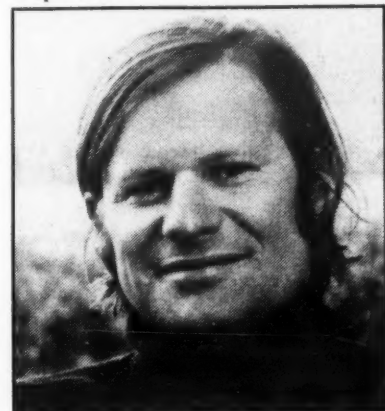
## 'Historical Souffle'

Antebellum North Carolina, wrote one of the state's more cynical historians, was "a vale of humility between two mountains of conceit," its poor yeomen farmers looked down on by the haughty plantation owners and cavalry officers of neighboring Virginia and South Carolina. Perhaps as a result, one of the few things the state could always be proud of was its tradition of dissent, of common citizens standing up against the arbitrary and unjust action of those in authority.

So when the North Carolina Bicentennial Commission decided to produce a series of six films about the state's history, it was only natural that the first film scheduled was entitled *Mankind Minus One—A film on Dissent in North Carolina*. Contracted to write the 30-minute script was James Reston, Jr., a young novelist, free-lance journalist and

lecturer in creative writing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The script the Bicentennial Commission got, however, was clearly not the one it, the script committee or project director Dr. Larry Tise, acting director of the North Carolina Department of Archives and His-



James Reston, Jr.

tory, had in mind. Reston's version emphasized the birth and growth of the civil rights movement in the state and included a section on the (locally) infamous Communist-led Gastonia, N.C., textile strike of 1929. The young, longish-haired Tise, who had thought up the film idea, said that although his own concept of bicentennialism comes from the more radical Peoples' Bicentennial Commission, Reston's script simply went too far, leaving out traditional dis-



# HELLBOX

sengers while treating dissent as though it were the sole property of the left. And, according to another script committee member, the script included "too much of the racial aspect." The script was rejected.

"I wanted something more than just the 'fife and drum' aspect of the Bicentennial. I wanted to make people uncomfortable, to provoke them," says Reston, who is "extremely bitter" over the experience. What Tise really wanted, according to Reston, was "a safe film on dissent," but for that he needed "a hack writer who would follow his orders and create an historical soufflé... This is just one more instance in a national pattern where an official Bicentennial organization cannot deal squarely with the American Revolutionary tradition."

After some discussion and the threat of litigation, Reston settled for \$2,250 of the \$3,750 promised for the completed work. The commission hopes to resume the project, but plans are now in limbo pending the availability of funds.

—MARK PINSKY

## Goodbye, Columbia

One result of campus unrest and race riots of the 1960s was the establishment of the Michele Clark program at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, aimed at increasing the number of minorities in the print and broadcast media. The unique program, which guaranteed jobs to the 15 annual participants completing a rigorous 11-week training program, received funds mainly



Earl Caldwell

UPI

from CBS, NBC and the Ford Foundation. Since the program began in 1968, 225 minority students, at a cost of \$12,000 per student, have received jobs at such organizations as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Globe*, ABC and CBS.

Last summer, however, the program was discontinued due to the withdrawal of funds by its main contributors. Lack of financial support and resentment from students enrolled in the regular one-year journalism program, were the reasons, Fred W. Friendly, professor at Columbia and advisor on communications for the Ford Foundation, told the final graduating class.

The program's five-member faculty committee, however, was determined to see the project continue, if not at Columbia then elsewhere. They asked former *New York Times* reporter and faculty member Earl Caldwell to travel around the country and raise enough money to begin the project at a new proposed location: the University of California at Berkeley.

Caldwell first approached Friendly and the Ford Foundation since the program was, in Friendly's words, "my baby." But Friendly told Caldwell first to see if he could raise 75 per cent of the \$125,000 necessary to operate the program. Then the Ford Foundation might supply the remaining 25 per cent, said Friendly.

Drawing on a \$25,000 Gannett newspaper grant, Caldwell took only ten days to raise the funds. The contributors included *The Los Angeles Times*, the Dow Jones Company, *The Boston Globe*, The New York Times foundation, the Hearst foundation, the Gannett newspaper foundation, the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, the Markle foundation, and *Forbes* magazine. Caldwell says the program is cheaper to operate in California and does not now need the Ford Foundation's money. He does not rule out the possibility of asking the foundation for support in the future.

Among the savings in California would be costs of professors and costs of paying the students to undertake the training. "The students were paid \$100 per week because, as you know, many minorities are so deprived they cannot afford the summer going to school, so we had to pay them," Friendly said.

—KEVIN L. GOLDMAN

## The Winner and Still Editor . . .

The Florida House of Representatives recently defeated, 64 to 51, a proposal to let the public vote on the state newspapers' managing editors. Rep. Art Rude had proposed that managing editors' names appear on every general election ballot with the question, "Is he doing a competent job?"

The amendment was intended to delay repeal of the "right to reply law," a Supreme Court-voided statute requiring newspapers to give public officials space to reply to editorial criticism. According to Rude, who feels newspapers often publish unfair editorials on candidates, "There are many managing editors who wouldn't get re-elected."

—LAUREN SASS



Umpire Harry Wendelstedt shows who's the boss.

Wide World

## Trouble in Mudville

A book about major league umpires has created one of the biggest rhubarbs of the 1975 baseball season. Lee Gutkind's *The Best Seat in Baseball, But You Have to Stand!* quotes National League umpire Harry Wendelstedt as calling the Pittsburgh Pirates' Ken Brett and Richie Hebner "Quarter-wits... Put them together and all you've got is a half-wit," and their teammate Bruce Kison "the dumbest player in the major leagues." In all, more than a dozen players, officials and fellow umpires come under fire from Wendelstedt and his peers.

"I swear by my family I didn't say those things," Wendelstedt said after reading the book. "Three-quarters of that book is lies... The man is sick." More recently, the umpires have become unquotable on the advice of counsel. Another of the book's aggrieved subjects is columnist Dick Young of the *New York Daily News*, whom Wendelstedt is quoted as calling a "corruptible cocksucker." Young says he may sue Gutkind and his publisher Dial Press "not for the second word but for the first."

Gutkind, a 32-year-old assistant professor of creative writing at the University of Pittsburgh, stands by his quotes and is considering a suit of his own. "I told the umpires that I was a writer and anything they said in my presence would be possibly quotable unless they told me in advance it was off the record," he said. "Sometimes I would say, 'Harry, do

you really want to say that?' and he would say, 'We're gonna tell all and I don't care what they do to me.'" There were only three subjects Gutkind says he agreed not to probe—"sex, the strike of 1971, and a third thing I can't discuss."

In the last chapter, however, Gutkind admits that he often had drinks with Wendelstedt and left the bar to take down notes in the men's room. On another occasion, Gutkind writes, he overheard one particularly revealing conversation while pretending to be asleep. That he used no tapes and made a number of factual errors has left him open to further criticism.

"It's a very derogatory book," says Fred G. Fleig, secretary-treasurer of the National League and supervisor of its umpires. "It's a porno book to me." To a more disinterested reader, Gutkind's chronicle of the 1974 season is a generally thorough and sympathetic look at a hard-bitten group of overworked and underpaid men.

Ironically, major league umpires last winter decided to begin openly criticizing player performances as well as defending their own to the press. Previously they had been available after games only to explain controversial rulings. This change in policy resulted from a 1974 player poll rating the umpires. During the off-season, no one was more outspokenly in favor of the new "freedom of speech" policy than the president of the umpires association, Harry Wendelstedt.

—JIM KAPLAN



# Covering The Happy Ending

BY FRANCES FITZGERALD

To many Americans, though not, perhaps, to all, the world appears a rather different place than it did in the early 1960s when the Vietnam war began. The experience of the war has taught us that our leaders can lie to the public for their own personal ends and that our soldiers, like the soldiers of any other country, can massacre civilians in cold blood. The war has shown us that there are deep political divisions in this country and that a small, underdeveloped Asian society can stand up to the greatest military power on earth. It has brought into question the morality and practicality of the American attempt to play global policeman and to dominate the countries of the Third World.

More than any other sector of society, the American press has had an opportunity to register these changes and to understand the lessons of the war. Many reporters, after all, went to Vietnam and saw the war for themselves; others in Washington dealt most intimately with the government conspiracy to deceive them and the rest of the public. In Vietnam, as in Watergate, the press played an important role in the whole constitutional system of checks and balances and was rewarded for it—rewarded at least in the sense that many of the journalists most responsible for unmasking the conspiracy were turned into heroes and superstars.

As there is a Post-Vietnam Syndrome among G.I.s, so there ought to be another, more positive, kind of syndrome among journalists. After the experience of the war the press ought to be more independent, more secure in its own pursuit of the truth, or, at the very least, a little less submissive to official manipulation. But to look at the reporting of the last few months of the war is to see that none of this has occurred. After 15 years on one story, the news organizations appear to have learned almost nothing, and their policies have changed rather less than Henry Kissinger's.

It is not that all the reporting of the war was bad in its last days. The reporting was never all bad at any stage of the war. This year, just as in 1962 and '63, a number of correspondents in Saigon and Phnom Penh wrote accurately and well under the most difficult circumstances. (Even the circumstances seemed to parallel those of the early 1960s. Ambassador Martin's attack on David Shipler of *The New York Times* recalled Ambassador Nolting's attack on David Halberstam.) Then, too, many of the correspondents were the same ones who had covered the initial crises. Back again in Saigon, Peter Arnett of the AP and Malcolm Browne of the *Times* showed the same energy and resourcefulness as they had a decade before. To make the end of the war agree perfectly with the beginning, there was one exceptional writer: Sydney Schanberg [Rosebuds—June 1975]. Schanberg's last series in the *Times* on the capture of Phnom Penh by the guerrillas and the behavior of the foreigners trapped in the French embassy compound was as rich a piece of literature as Graham Greene's *Quiet American*. As Greene's book was a forecast of the American war, so Schanberg's work serves as the perfect epitaph for the entire French and American enterprise in Indochina.

As always, however, intelligent reporting of the war was the exception rather than the rule—and an exception confined almost exclusively to the newspaper journalists on the spot, in Indochina. Television—television that promised to change the nature of foreign reporting and the relationship of Americans to war—proved once again incapable of describing the situation or presenting the issues in comprehensible form. What television broadcast was a series of images that might as well have been stills: soldiers hanging onto helicopter struts, refugees running down roads. The same scenes were shot a hundred times during the war, and now, as ever, it was not at all clear what was hap-

**"After 15 years of reporting the war in Indochina, the news organizations appear to have learned almost nothing, and their policies to have changed rather less than Henry Kissinger's."**

pening—what in some larger sense, was going on. The absurdity of television was brought to its Platonic essence in the two or three minutes that CBS gave to a Peter Kalisher report from Danang. Just two weeks or so after the city changed hands and before the war ended, Kalisher received exclusive permission from the North Vietnamese to fly into Danang via Hanoi and film the city as it was under the new regime. In the few minutes he had on the air, Kalisher showed some aerial photography of Central Vietnam (details indistinct) and did a stand-up in the middle of a Danang street in which he asked a couple of rhetorical questions—such as how the Vietnamese felt about their new government—and concluded, quite correctly, that he could not answer them.

The networks, of course, made some attempt to put these imponderable moments into context with round-ups and specials on the history of the war. But as these programs consisted largely of more footage of running refugees, more unanswerable questions and interviews with "experts" chosen for their exactly contrasting views, they ended as little more than lists—and confirmations that there was no meaning to the war. The television executives obviously felt that the war, even at its end, was much too hot a political issue for them to take a position that might offend some among the millions of their viewers. The problem was, however, that in refusing to take a point of view, they robbed meaning from the lives of everyone who had ever fought in the war or protested against it.

The mindlessness of television news is perhaps too general to complain about. But a good deal of the television and other news coverage of the end of the war was worse than mindless. It was terrible. And it was terrible in ways that have by now become traditional to Vietnam war reporting. In March and April the news organizations plunged headlong into the series of traps laid for them by the Administration—traps now so old that models of them must be on display somewhere in the Smithsonian with labels describing their history. The oldest and the crudest of them was the one Ike Pappas of CBS and the editors of *The Washington Post* walked into when they featured a story from "American intelligence sources" in Saigon to the effect that the Provisional Revolutionary Government had already taken the first steps in a massive campaign of reprisals against Saigon government supporters that would end with "the slaughterhouse" for millions of South Vietnamese. That trap of disinformation is quite clearly marked, if not in the Smithsonian, at least in the Pentagon Papers, with the name of Joseph Alsop and the date of 1954. The then-Colonel Edward Lansdale tried to plant a "captured document" on Alsop, suggesting that the guerrilla troops would be sent not to North Vietnam, as the Geneva Accords specified, but to China.

The most banal of the traps, and the one used most consistently throughout the war, was that of the American military briefing designed to

show progress even in defeat. In the last weeks of the war it was the *Times* that fell most heavily for this one, as it gave Drew Middleton a thousand words a day to report the fantasies of "military analysts" in Washington even while its own correspondents were reporting from the real world in Saigon. The *Times*'s decision was inexplicable unless the intention was to create the soap opera-type suspense (And tomorrow we'll return to those little tigers from the ARVN 25th division. Will they or won't they be able to hold Cu Chi?) usually associated with Robert Shaplen's political reporting in *The New Yorker*. (Shaplen in the end ran absolutely true to form. He described the demise of the entire American project in Indochina in exactly the same tone he used to report the latest squabble between two Catholics, three Buddhists and an ARVN general.)

Just a few weeks before the end, the Ford Administration repeated a trick that Nixon had used only two years before: it persuaded the press to serve as a platform for a propaganda spectacular designed to distract the public from defeat on the battlefield and show the triumph of American virtue over the savagery of the Vietnamese. The manipulation behind "Operation Babylift" ought to have been obvious, but, like the hugely feted return of the American POWs, it did not even begin to strain press gullibility. After that—and perhaps because of the encouragement to the Administration—came the *Mayaguez* incident where, as others have said, the history of the *Maddox* in the Tonkin Gulf repeated itself as a small, bloody farce. Among others, *Time* magazine and a half of the split personality that writes *Newsweek* copy went along.

The press might have avoided some of these egregious errors, but by 1975 it was probably too late for journalists and editors to break those habits that traditionally on a day-to-day basis distorted their reporting of the war. One of these habits—so well-ingrained it is hardly noticed anymore—was that of presenting the views of Administration officials on the front page, those of congressional critics on the back pages and those of people leading large demonstrations nowhere at all. It is important, of course, to know what Administration officials say, but on an issue where officials have an unblemished record of duplicity, a few questions and/or a second opinion would seem appropriate. But these questions did not get raised any more widely at the end than at the beginning of the war. In February, for instance, the press gave great play to statements by Kissinger and Defense Secretary James Schlesinger that the situation in Cambodia could be "stabilized" if only the Congress would appropriate \$222 million in military aid. When Leslie Gelb of the *Times* reported that Kissinger and Schlesinger were saying in private that they did not believe the Lon Nol regime would last under any circumstances, his story (one that undoubtedly jeopardized his access to an important source) sunk like a stone. The next day another *Times* reporter wrote that Schlesinger had denied the story—even while he himself presented evidence that Schlesinger had in the main confirmed it. Just as in 1962 or '63, the "balance" of the news organizations was a tilt, a lean or a bending-over-double in the direction of the Administration.

This obsequious posture explains another habit, and that is the tendency of the press throughout the war to discuss issues in the terms that the Administration presented them. In the mid-60s, for instance, the press talked sanguinely about "pacification" and questioned only whether or not it would work. In 1975, after the United States dropped on Indochina some three or four times the tonnage of explosives it used in all theatres of World War II, the press seriously considered whether, as Kissinger said, the end of the war signified the growth of isolationism in the United States. A third habit, closely related to the first two, is the refusal of Washington reporters to

Frances FitzGerald is the author of *Fire In The Lake—Vietnamese and Americans in Vietnam* (Little, Brown).



# Marching backward into the future.

Even in the best of times, good news enjoys scant currency in the media. But now, there's much talk of everything simply winding down. A shambling toward doomsday.

We'd like to raise a voice of dissent. A "take heart" dissent rooted in man's historic cussedness and ingenuity in the face of adversity.

Today's doomsters, like yesterday's, suffer from tunnel vision. They are infatuated with projecting the gloomy absolutes of their own age upon future worlds they can't visualize. Worlds of fast-changing conditions and values which have repeatedly generated their own coping mechanisms.

In plotting their disaster charts, the doomsters forget that both man's curse and salvation is his erratic behavior. Human events pursue a course predictable in only one respect: forever skirting the abyss.

History, happily, is strewn with the doomsters' unfulfilled prophecies. Many early Christians abandoned all hope for the here and now. The philosopher, Oswald Spengler, saw World War I as the tragic epilogue to Western Civilization.

In the 1860's, the loss of whaling ships to Confederate cruisers threatened an energy crisis—whale oil. But

America's lamps kept burning because petroleum was discovered in undreamed-of quantity. (Just as other fuels—though they're considered exotic today, or are as yet undreamed-of—will eventually turn oil into yesterday's fuel.)

Three years ago, members of a distinguished international group of academicians, the Club of Rome, produced a thick report called "The Limits of Growth." Drawing scientific authority from computer projections, this widely publicized doomsday forecast called for revolutionary changes in lifestyles so that mankind would not consume, pollute, and overpopulate civilization into total collapse within the century.

But a funny thing has happened on the way to the apocalypse. The same Club of Rome has issued a new report, "Mankind at The Turning Point," which may give us all a reprieve. Its authors could be the first alarmists to be frightened by their own visions of the future. In essence, they now say that with massive capital investment and global cooperation we can solve the world's shortages of goods and surfeit of people. We agree.

We agree, also, with the French poet, Paul Valery, that man too often marches backward into the future. But at least, being cussed and ingenious, he manages to get there.

## Mobil



deal with the subject of personal or bureaucratic self-interest within the Administration. When *Times* columnist Anthony Lewis dared to speculate about why Kissinger might be calling the fall of the Thieu regime a threat to all other American foreign policy objectives, the *Times* abandoned its usual strictures against direct debate on the Op-Ed Page and gave Kissinger's assistant, Larry Eagleburger, the space to attack Lewis by name. This journalistic incuriosity about official motivations is particularly striking since by the testimony of the Pentagon Papers the only dominoes the officials who directed the war ever took seriously were their own jobs.

Whether taking its lead from Administration officials or from rather deeper currents in American society, the press never altered its perspective on the Indochinese. Reporting on the Indochinese Communists posed, of course, a particular problem. Anything a North Vietnamese or PRG official said had, it seemed, to be hedged about by disclaimers ("This is a Communist film you are seeing.") and any statement about them examined on the basis of whether or not it could be attacked as propaganda. It is only now that the PRG can be called by the name that they themselves chose. But the ideological barriers were not the only obstacles to vision—the proof being that the reporting on the American "allies" was hardly any more rounded. No more at the end of the war than at its beginning did Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao casualties figure in the same calculation with American dead and wounded: We all know that 55,000 Americans died in the war, but how many ARVN soldiers died in American-made uniforms?

Then, too, the press rarely reported what Saigon government officials or opposition leaders said. Had journalists reported what Ngo Dinh Diem said, had they given him as much space as they gave Robert McNamara (who, after all, knew very little about Vietnam), the Kennedy Administration might have had a good deal of difficulty raising support for sending American aid and advisors to Vietnam. But the war to the press was exclusively an American venture, and so it remained until—mysteriously—there were no more Americans in Vietnam. In 1973, a "South Vietnamese official" told Sylvan Fox of the *Times* that Nixon had promised Thieu that the United States would intervene immediately if the Communists committed any blatant violations of the cease-fire. The story of the secret agreement became a big one—but not until two years later when an American gave it out. In other words after 15 years of reporting Vietnam the press still does not accord the Vietnamese the status of sources—or persons.

In the early 1960s, the failure of the press to report on the guerrilla movement in South Vietnam and to analyse the government in Hanoi had disastrous consequences for the United States. Then it would have been helpful to know about the French experience in Indochina and to know at least what the U.S. government knew about the North Vietnamese. Now that Vietnam is the new power in Southeast Asia—already the Vietnamese victory has changed a whole constellation of political attitudes in the region—it would be helpful to know what is happening in the North or the South. But the coverage of post-war Vietnam is superficial—to the extent that it exists at all. Once Ambassador Martin boarded his helicopter with flag and poodle, the press seemed to give up its attempt at serious reporting. A number of American correspondents remained in Saigon, but they lacked space, and as time went on, they seemed to lose enthusiasm. The 150,000 refugees in the United States received five or ten times the attention given to the 18 million people in the throes of one of the most dramatic political changes in the past two or three decades. Certain correspondents, such as George Esper of the AP, objected to the new regime on aesthetic grounds: Saigon without its bar and brothels, Esper reported, lacked a certain *joie de vivre*. The stories from Saigon had more and more to do with the fate of foreigners—and particularly the press corps—and less and less to do with the Vietnamese. And gradually the American journal-

***"The manipulation behind 'Operation Babylift' ought to have been obvious, but, like the hugely feted return of American POWs, it did not even begin to strain press gullibility."***



ists left Saigon, most of them by their own volition, their departure unmourned by the Vietnamese.

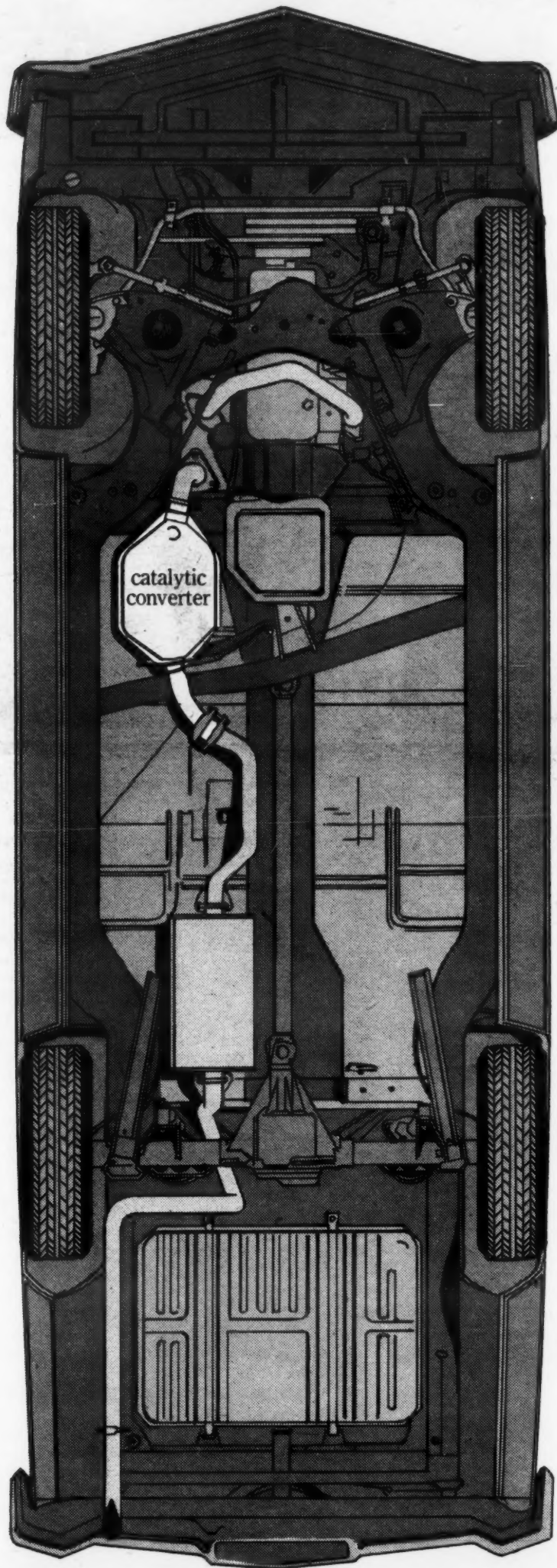
The Indochina war may be an exceptional case; there may be no parallels to it in our history and no lessons that the press can draw from it in reporting foreign policy or international affairs. But it is doubtful. It is particularly so after Watergate, after Chile, and after the great care that Kissinger took to link Indochina to the rest of his foreign policy. If there are parallels, even minor ones, then it is worthwhile to ask a few basic questions about the capacity of the press for reporting on other countries. With certain exceptions the press in Indochina was remarkably solipsistic. Does this mean that in general it is too ignorant, too culture-bound to report on Third World countries? A better question, perhaps, is whether the press can act independently from the executive branch of the U.S. government—whether it can do anything to mitigate its virtual dictatorship over foreign affairs. A few brave and hard-working reporters have scratched at the surface of the great wall of "national security" secrecy, but it was the Pentagon Papers, not the press, that told us how

Administration officials formed the Vietnam policy. Is the attempt impossible? Or is it that American publishers, editors and reporters are too allied with American government and corporate interests to use their considerable institutional power? Whom is the "responsible" American press being responsible to—the government or the American public at large? Possibly the press can change, but it is a bad sign that, like the Ford Administration, it had not stopped to review its own role in the Indochina war.

*Frances FitzGerald was a participant at the Fourth A.J. Liebling Counter Convention in a discussion on "Covering the 'Enemy': The Press and Indochina." Her essay here draws on her own observations and those of her fellow panelists: Marian McCue, of Seven Days; Fred Branfman, of the Indochina Resource Center; Carol Brightman, former editor of Viet Report; Philip Geyelin, editorial page editor of The Washington Post and David Halberstam, author of The Best and the Brightest.*



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Catalytic converter, standard equipment on 1975 model GM cars.

Primarily because of the catalytic converter, gas mileage on GM cars has been increased by 28% on a sales-weighted average, according to EPA figures.

The converter gives GM car owners the best of both worlds: emissions of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons are cut by about 50% from the already lowered levels of 1974, and it is possible once more to tune engines for economy, drivability and performance.

Catalytic converters do add to the basic cost of a GM car. Part of that money goes for insulation that keeps the outer skin temperature of the converter in normal operation about the same as that of an ordinary muffler, and far lower than the temperature of the exhaust manifold.

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After more than a billion miles on the road, the GM catalytic converter has become a world standard in pollution control devices. GM has signed contracts to build converters for auto-makers in Europe and Asia, as well as other U.S. manufacturers.

You get the fuel-saving advantages of a catalytic converter as standard equipment on 1975 cars from General Motors, a world leader in automotive pollution control technology.

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# The Art Of The Interview

Few journalistic techniques are as widely used and as little explored as the interview. At the Fourth A. J. Liebling Counter Convention, in May, four skillful practitioners sought to examine the art.

Moderated by Nat Hentoff of The Village Voice, the panel included Mike Wallace of CBS's "60 Minutes"; The Washington Post's Sally Quinn, author of *We're Going To Make You A Star*, a book out next month describing her brief and unhappy experience co-anchoring the "CBS Morning News"; and Richard Reeves, New York magazine political writer and author of an upcoming book on President Ford's first hundred days in the White House. Following are excerpts of their discussion. The transcript has been edited for space and syntax.

**HENTOFF:** We're going to start with a clip from one of Mike's interviews—about five minutes with a celebrated American patriot—G. Gordon Liddy. And I think in his own assessment of himself that's quite true. First of all, how was the interview arranged, where was it done, and aside from any problems of geographic logistics, or sight logistics, were there any particular problems in doing this particular interview with Liddy that were different from others you've done?

**WALLACE:** What everybody had in mind when "60 Minutes" went back on the air at the beginning of January this year was to get a story that would attract some attention to the fact that we were back on the air. We'd been off since September. Liddy had recently written a letter for *Harper's* and it became apparent that he was at least available for talking to. Gordon Manning, then a vice president at CBS News, got in touch with Liddy's attorney and a contract was drawn for him to appear. He had never said a word on television, really, nothing at all.

After the arrangements were made, I went down to Washington with Gordon and a producer from "60 Minutes" by the name of Marion Goldin and we had dinner with Liddy. And it became apparent that he would not talk substantively about the whole Watergate break-in at all. So we were a little concerned as to what, indeed, we might get out of him. We knew that we would get a character sketch—an autobiographical character sketch. He was a curiosity and virtually anything that he had to say in public was going to be fairly interesting, it was as simple as that. We went out to his house on the day of the interview to do some filming with him, his wife and his five kids. When we walked into the house it was shaking with German marching songs on the stereo, which was a little bit of an indication of the direction we were heading. Eventually, we all got into a car and drove downtown to the Madison Hotel. We sat there and proceeded to try to get him a little bit loaded, because when we had dinner with him, it was about three hours into the evening before he began to loosen up a little bit. We figured we were smart as hell; but he was smarter than we, he didn't drink a damn thing, and so we finally began the film and filmed about an hour (of which we played 15 minutes) and went our separate ways—I back to CBS and he to Federal prison in Danbury, Conn.

(The clip from the Liddy film begins.)

**WALLACE:** He wouldn't tell his family, he wouldn't tell the prosecutors, he wouldn't tell the court and he wouldn't tell us precisely what transpired the night of June 17, 1972... this man who professes to believe deeply in duty, loyalty and patriotism. Was it duty, loyalty, patriotism to plan to kidnap anti-Republican radicals from Miami Beach from the GOP Convention in 1972? Was it duty, loyalty, patriotism to plan to employ call girls to entrap Democratic politicians at their convention?

**LIDDY:** I don't comment on those tactics, I will comment on the uses, or the absence of uses, of power. Power exists to be used. The first obligation of a man in power or someone seeking power is to get himself elected.

**WALLACE:** Is there nothing that cannot or should not be done in the pursuit of power?



**LIDDY:** Yes, it depends on what you define. If Watergate is as it's alleged to be, it was an intelligence-gathering operation of one group of persons who were seeking power, or to retain power, against another group of persons who were seeking to acquire power. That's all it was. It's like brushing your teeth, Michael; it's basic.

**WALLACE:** it's like brushing... explain, what's like brushing your teeth?

**LIDDY:** Well, if one is engaged in a war, one deploys troops; one seeks to know the capability, intentions of the enemy and things of that sort. If one is engaged in politics, one deploys political troops, one seeks to learn the capabilities and intentions of the other side—the opposition.

**WALLACE:** By any means? Even if laws are broken in doing it?

**LIDDY:** I think that that is a fair statement as to fact, that is the way it is.

**WALLACE:** One of your former associates—a man who talked—was Howard Hunt. And he finally decided to talk after he read what was in the White House tapes, when he saw himself and you described in those tapes as jackasses and idiots. Then he said he realized that the men in the White House were not worthy of his loyalty—his words. Has that never occurred to you?

**LIDDY:** Not at all. Mike, you're sophisticated enough to know how men talk, how they talk when they're angry, the kinds of things they say. You may have made similar remarks about people you regard highly, I don't know. But I do know that a lot of men do, and that somebody uses locker room talk and my name gets involved in that; I am just not that sensitive to somebody's language.

**WALLACE:** The President of the United States, the man to whom you are loyal, the man on whose behalf you are not talking, or out of loyalty for whom you are not talking, said on the White House tapes—he described Gordon Liddy, quote, "as a little bit nuts, I mean he just isn't well screwed on isn't he."

**LIDDY:** Yes, he also said the same thing about Herb Klein, you know how he feels about Herb Klein.

**WALLACE:** Shouldn't loyalty go both ways, shouldn't it go down as well as up; you're loyal, what about him?

**LIDDY:** I have detected no disloyalty to me in Richard Nixon.

**WALLACE:** President Nixon, in a speech to the nation in April of 1974, said that he would meet personally with your lawyer to assure him that—the President's words—"I want Liddy to talk and tell the truth." Now, isn't that an order from your Commander in Chief?

**LIDDY:** That's a substantive matter about the entire proceedings which goes under the heading of



Watergate, concerning which I just don't comment.

**WALLACE:** You confuse me, you say you don't talk, at least partially out of loyalty to Richard Nixon, who is the President, who is your commander; then your commander tells the nation that he wants Liddy to talk and tell the truth and you say...

**LIDDY:** I say nothing.

**WALLACE:** John Dean was the man who recommended you for your job at CREEP. What's your opinion of John Dean?

**LIDDY:** I think in all fairness to the man, you'd have to put him right up there with Judas Iscariot.

**WALLACE:** Judas Iscariot, in other words he betrayed Christ. Christ being Richard Nixon?

**LIDDY:** No, he being a betrayer of a person in high position.

**WALLACE:** And what do you think his motive was?

**LIDDY:** Save his ass.

**WALLACE:** That's all?

**LIDDY:** That's all.

**WALLACE:** Shouldn't of said a word?

**LIDDY:** That's what I feel.

**WALLACE:** The best thing to do was to remain silent, let Watergate go on—if you will—the cover-up, the works?

**LIDDY:** I think John Dean should have remained loyal to his President.

**WALLACE:** Your boss at CREEP was Jeb Magruder. He described you almost as a comic figure, a cocky little bantam rooster he called you, who liked to brag about his James Bondish exploits. Did you really threaten to kill Jeb Magruder?

**LIDDY:** I think that's one of the few truthful statements that Jeb Magruder has made.

(Film clip ends.)

**HENTOFF:** I have one question and then I would like to get Sally Quinn's and Dick Reeves's reaction. What struck me as much more important in television than in print, or at least it's quite different, is the rhythm of the interview. You had a rhythm going, a really extraordinary rhythm. Partly because you were obviously prepared, you knew what to ask him to get responses, you didn't have to fumble around with a clipboard or go looking through loose leaf sheets to get it. But to what extent was that also editing?

**WALLACE:** I was about to say that most of the rhythm that you're talking about is editing. When you do a live interview, or you do a live-on-tape interview, that's totally different. But, as I said, we did about an hour's worth of film. And the whole interview came down to about 15 minutes. And we had two cameras going. Obviously, we had the opportunity to construct an interview out of this. Now there are certain guidelines that are laid down by CBS News and its president, Dick Salant, which say, for example, you can't have a different answer for a different question, etc.

**HENTOFF:** Those were guidelines, I think we ought to point out, that got considerably sharper after "The Selling of the Pentagon," when there was a fierce exchange between some editorial-page writers on *The Washington Post* and Mr. Salant about how that documentary was edited.

**WALLACE:** The other thing is that you keep the wheat and get rid of the chaff in that kind of an editing. So to that degree anyway, I suppose it's a little bit like one of Sally's pieces in the *Post*, when she does a profile or interview or whatever and she decides how she is going to use things editorially.

**QUINN:** That's true, absolutely true. If you're doing an edited television piece or an edited written piece, you have the option of deciding what it is that's the most exciting or interesting or fun or provocative thing the person says, where the quotes are going to go. I mean they may say the most interesting quote at the very end of the interview, in which case you use that as your lead. The big difference is that difference between live television, where you don't have a chance to edit, and written interviews. The interview that Mike did, Mike has a marvelous way of participating, of being a personality as well as a person who's interviewing, so that there's kind

of a one-on-one. You can't do that if you're doing a written interview unless you continually put yourself in, or unless you're doing a Q. and A. But, Mike, you can spar with the person you're interviewing, which would get you nowhere if you were doing a written interview because you'd only make the person mad. But when you're doing it live, or when you're doing it taped, you can get at them or get a certain reaction that wouldn't work if you were trying to write it.

**WALLACE:** Yes, but all the sparring in the world can fail you. For instance, in the Haldeman interview—God, it got me nowhere. He really by and large controlled that thing. The amount of preparation I had done on that bloody interview was monumental. But because he was willing to show his teeth and smile, and he was tan and good looking and bland, he wound up conveying the impression that he wanted to convey.

**HENTOFF:** What if Haldeman had not agreed to the interview for money, but had actually been persuaded by you to appear. Would that possibly have made it easier for you to enable him to say some of the things that you wanted him to say, that initial drawing down of a defense?

**WALLACE:** "Haldeman really by and large controlled that thing . . . because he was willing to show his teeth and smile, and he was tan and good looking and bland, he wound up conveying the impression he wanted to convey."

**WALLACE:** It seems to me that with the ordinary interview, and when I say the ordinary interview it's almost any political figure of whatever, you don't come in, the audience doesn't come in with as much of a mind-set as they do with certain interviews. With Haldeman, there was a mind-set—induced by the fact that in the minds of so many people he was the arch-villain or the vice arch-villain of the whole Watergate affair. They wanted that reconfirmed. Then add to that the fact that he had been paid a lot of dough: "Can you imagine, they paid thousands of dollars to this convicted felon, go get him." And when you don't "get" your guy that way, then I think there's an extra disappointment.

**HENTOFF:** Maybe you should have had Dick Salant do the interviewing, since he arranged it.

**REEVES:** A couple of comments. One, I agree with Mike's point that edited television interviews and printed interviews in many ways are the same except for the factor that the interviewer's personality and his own particular skills of projecting on TV become very important. The fact is you would have been in real trouble if you were not as witty as Liddy when he threw out lines like Judas. I do a lot of live television interviewing and I'll just throw out three points on the extraordinary differences between live and edited interviewing. One is, and I hate to admit it, you have to be better prepared for television interviews if you're dealing with public figures. Because on live television or live tape, when they lie to you, you've got to know they're lying to you. In print you can go back and check and you don't get caught.

It is also very tough on live television or unedited television to ask risky questions. The best questions or reaction I can remember of that kind were in an edited film interview in 1968. David Frost asking George Wallace, how would you feel if your daughter married a Negro. Wallace just went crazy—started to rant, rave, got up and finally walked out. It was terrific film and that was a terribly dramatic reaction. But, on live television you're very careful not to ask a question like that. A simple or deceptive question often gets a terrific reaction. On the other hand, it often gives the interviewee an opportunity to make a fool of you, so you kind of hold back on that kind of question on live television and unedited tape.

There is also a dishonesty in live television—the kind of "Today Show" television. I do a show in New York which is something like that. Because of

the volume of material it handles it is normally booked before the interviewer is prepared. In other words, the show books in authors before the interviewer has read the book. You then read the book and find out it's terrible, it's just a terrible piece of work.

**HENTOFF:** Don't you have any veto power about guests, can you say—no, I'm not going to interview this idiot?

**REEVES:** You do have veto power, but this still happens three out of five times. You wouldn't be able to work, otherwise. What you should really do is turn to the camera and say, "I'm sorry we bothered you, folks." The fact is, however, you live in a real world and you go on and you let the person do his or her pitch. It's really not interviewing, it's you lobbing up a ball for them to hit out.

**HENTOFF:** Obviously a key goal of an interview, whether it's on television or in newspapers, magazines or books, is to get the interviewee to say something that he or she is really not prepared to say; and sometimes to say something that he or she may not really have thought about, or thought out clearly and that would be terribly revealing if it finally comes out. Those are the memorable mo-

ments in interviews that work. I'm always fascinated by how journalists do this. Sally, how do you make a subject sufficiently at ease? Or are some subjects better from your point of view if they are not at ease? And in that case, how do you reverse it?

**QUINN:** I don't think that any subject is ever better when they're not at ease. I never really thought about how I did it until I was asked to be on this panel. Suddenly I began to think about it and I thought about last year when I found myself on the other side of the pad and pencil. I was being interviewed and I had gotten a lot of bad publicity and the people who came to interview me, having read the things about me, decided they didn't like me before they ever met me. And so they would come on very hostile, I mean really vicious. It was like, you're guilty until proven innocent. They'd sort of attack me with the first question—what makes you think you're so hot, sweetheart? My reaction was to close up immediately. They weren't going to get anything out of me at all and none of those interviews ever came out giving the reader any idea of what I was like because I was very terse and not at all open.

I think when you go out to do an interview that your only mission, really, is to come back and give the reader an idea of what the person's really like, and if you can't do that, you have failed. That is what you are there to do. If you are going to get people to open up and to be themselves and to reveal something to you, I think that the best way to do it is to create an atmosphere of sympathy . . . to make that person believe or feel that you like him or her, that you can understand the fears and hopes and dreams and whatever else there is about that person. I majored in theater in college, I studied the Stanislavsky method, and then I quickly forgot it, cause I thought it was ridiculous. But I recently started thinking about how, in a sense, you can almost use that method when you're interviewing somebody. You can put yourself into that person's place and try to feel what he's feeling, what she's feeling; try to think what the things are that really get to them. They can sense that empathy, and they'll open up to you, and this just never fails. Well, it does fail, sometimes, but generally if you have enough time with a person—if you've got a half an hour or 45 minutes, it's just not going to work—but if you have enough time with that person and you can make them relax and feel comfortable, I just find inevitably they'll tell you what



**QUINN: "I interviewed Joyce Carol Oates and . . . she kept asking me questions about myself and I got the distinct impression that she was thinking of another novel and that I was a character."**

they're really thinking.

HENTOFF: How do you think that might have worked on Haldeman?

QUINN: Well, I don't think Haldeman would have given a written interview, first of all. I think what Haldeman knows about himself is that he's a clean-cut, nice-shining-white-tooth young man, or middle-aged man. I don't think that he would ever have been stupid enough to put himself in a position where someone else's perceptions of him could have been written rather than being able to put his own idea of what he is across. There are some people who are obviously hopeless subjects. I don't know what I would do if I were in a situation with Haldeman. I think I'd probably have to have a lot of time.

One of the things that happens when you're in front of a TV set is that the person is always aware that the set is there. After I left CBS I did an interview for the *Post* with Alice Roosevelt Longworth, and she really told me a lot of things. She talked to me about her lesbian experiences when she was a young girl and discussed various parts of the male body. She was very open, and Hughes Rudd, who was my co-anchor on CBS, called me the morning the piece ran. He said, "Jesus Christ, why didn't you have a camera in there and we should have had that on CBS and that's the kind of stuff you should have been doing." And I said, "Hughes, she never would have said those things to me in front of a camera, are you kidding?" That's one of the big differences.

WALLACE: That's a big difference. You're quite right. Back in the old days—'56, '57, '58—I used to do a broadcast in New York called "Night Beat." Eleven o'clock at night and it was such fun. We had an hour, two guests. The first one didn't work out you got rid of him in a hurry and put the second one on. We used an absolutely dark studio, nothing but the key light on him, the key light on me. And if you could establish somehow a chemistry between you and the interviewee, so that he forgot about the camera, forgot about the technicians in the studio, then you'd be getting a little bit of what Sally was talking about with Alice Longworth. But that's very darn hard to do. People are so much more sophisticated about cameras than they used to be, and they're so much more wary than they used to be, too. And also, once you've established a persona for yourself as an interviewer, then they're a little bit more skeptical if I try to establish some phony rapport.

HENTOFF: What do they expect, scorn?

WALLACE: I don't know, but they expect it to be business-like, by and large.

QUINN: One of the things, Mike that you do that's very effective, that I couldn't do, is the sparring relationship. Everytime you come down to Washington people start running around hysterical because they're going to be interviewed by you: "Oh, my God, he's going to tear me to pieces." One of the troubles I had when I was on television was that I just couldn't do it, because I was so used to creating this marvelous atmosphere of sympathy. It was very close to sucking up and I was horribly embarrassed to go on television and suck up to my guests in eight minutes. It was just disgusting. I kept thinking, I've got to be like Mike Wallace; I've got to really hit them hard. But in eight minutes you can't do either one, really. You establish what book your guest is pushing and that's about all you can do.

REEVES: People have said the most extraordinary things to Sally and don't deny that they said them, only regret. I once asked Sally what her technique was, because I had synthesized a technique which I

use. All reporting is, after all, role playing. I thought that Sally, which it turns out she doesn't, opened herself completely to the person she's interviewing. Tell them everything, the most personal details about yourself and your life. As human beings, they respond in kind, only their answers appear in print. That is a perfectly valid print technique and if the details of my life were interesting enough, I'd try it.

WALLACE: The reporter who uses those techniques is the guy who will fall prey to those techniques easier than anybody else. That was one of the reasons that Sally, in my estimation, got some of the bad press that she did. Because it's like the salesman who can be sold—it's the reporter who can be had by the same role-playing techniques of another good, interesting reporter.

REEVES: It is very valuable as an interviewer to have some kind of reputation of your own. It is very helpful if the person you're interviewing is also interested in you and also is interested in impressing you because they think you are somebody. They are a little more forthcoming. I find I love to interview liberal Democrats. They always deny it in public, but they believe what Pat Buchanan said: that we reporters are all one of them. So, the liberal Democrats will often give you an extraordinary amount because they think you are going to protect them—as women subjects now give women interviewers more information because they think they will be protected. Maybe they are sometimes; but they aren't all the time. And politicians often think because they perceive your political position to be close to theirs that they can tell you things and you'll protect them; well tough bananas baby.

A lot of politicians will also talk to you simply to trade information: "Hey, I hear you're just back from California, what do you hear?" It's a very valid technique; and, of course, the idea is to give as little as possible to get as much as possible in return.

HENTOFF: I just want to enter a slight demurrer on one of Dick's points: the idea that if the interviewer has himself or herself a reputation it is easier to establish the kind of rapport that will lead to a more productive interview. That depends. When you're doing certain kinds of stories—what I would call street stories—I think the more you are part of the wallpaper or the office wall or the bar, the better off you are. Because after a number of hours, if you're any good at playing invisible, they forget you're there—or most of them do. And I also think that there are other kinds of interviews, even with prominent people, where it's quite remarkable how people like to talk to journalists, including unknown journalists. Sometimes if you come in as almost the tabula rasa, you get an enormous amount that you would not otherwise.

REEVES: I have found that if you have a reputation for being a tough interviewer, for doing people in, that can be an advantage because many public figures are bored with the reporters they deal with all the time. And they always think that they can take you. Which is one of the reasons they talk to people you think they wouldn't talk to. They enjoy

**REEVES: "I have found that if you have a reputation for being a tough interviewer . . . that can be an advantage because many public figures are bored with the reporters they deal with all the time."**

the challenge. This is particularly true in Washington. Some of the reporters are just there as kind of sponges, to take whatever information is handed out.

QUINN: I must say I've had a great deal of trouble since I've become more or less well known in getting people to talk to me. Everybody in Washington was interviewing Betty Ford when she was the Vice President's wife . . . everybody. Well, I wasn't too crazy about interviewing Betty Ford. But I put in a request just to see what would happen, and I got the word back that it was out of the question. She just wouldn't have anything to do with me because she was scared, period. After she was the President's wife, then it became a challenge. I had to get the interview, and I did everything I possibly could. And I finally got it and it turned out I liked her, much to her surprise.

But I do find also that if people know about you, know who you are, a lot of times they ask you questions about yourself. I mean, I had somebody ask me for my autograph in the middle of an interview. It really kind of breaks the whole rhythm. I interviewed Joyce Carol Oates last week and she told me how she hated giving interviews, and how she never gave interviews. Finally, I said, why are you giving this interview? And she said, because I wanted to meet you. And then the whole rest of the interview—and I only had about 40 minutes—she kept asking me questions about myself and I got the distinct impression that she was thinking about another novel and that I was a character in the novel. She wanted to know about the trauma and the pain I felt. I walked away with my notes and I looked at them. I had almost nothing. It was a real disaster.

HENTOFF: My impression is that the biggest failing among television interviewers is not listening to the answer, preparing their next question instead of listening to what the person they are talking to is saying.

WALLACE: And shut-up, too. The single most interesting thing that you can do in television, I find, is to ask a good question and then let the answer hang there for two or three or four seconds as though you're expecting more. You know what, they get a little bit embarrassed and give you more.

QUINN: I think that it's much more effective to have a conversation with the person you're interviewing than to just sort of grill them, to shoot questions at them. I had one experience in my life where the interview was nothing but a conversation and it really brought this home to me. I had asked Bernardo Bertolucci, who had done *Last Tango in Paris*, for an interview but he had been in New York for two weeks and had given something like 380 interviews and he just drew the cutoff line right before me and said he wouldn't give another interview. So, I went to a party where I knew he was going to be and I asked him if he would give me an interview—and he said no. I hung around for a while and finally he said alright, I will give you an interview on one condition: the minute you ask me a single question that any other reporter has asked me in the last three weeks I will throw you out. I said okay and went to his hotel the next day. We sat down and I took out my notebook and put it on the side. He offered me a glass of water and I took it, and he just sat there, just waiting for me to ask him something. I didn't ask him any questions at all for about an hour and a half, I just talked to him. I would bring up one subject or another and he would respond to the subject. I never mentioned the movie. We were talking about Italy, and talking about New York and great restaurants and parties and clothes. I was getting a lot of stuff out of him,



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# LIEBLING IV

This is no place for cosmic meditations on how times have changed since the first A. J. Liebling Counter Convention, that chaotic Happening in 1972 that burst the seams of the Martin Luther King Labor Center in Manhattan. But it does seem worth asking why the conventions have grown less and less "counter" each year. One reason, I think, is that those of us who saw the annual meetings as the linchpin of a movement to redistribute power in the media have come to realize that, whatever the virtues of "democracy in the newsroom," very few journalists are seriously interested in pursuing it. Most accept management control as an irrevocable given and come to the conventions to socialize, seek jobs and learn. Such purposes, though hardly radical, don't seem intrinsically wicked—especially the latter. And at Liebling IV in New York this May we tried especially to create a useful and instructive event, scheduling panels like "The Art of the Interview" (excerpts of which begin on page 10 of this issue).

As our critics are happy to point out, there is a certain creeping institutionalism in all this. After four years, that may be inevitable—like the reading on our Xerox machine meter that insists we have made 13,029 copies of presumably important documents. But I don't think we're in any serious danger of becoming a kind of rumpled version of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, whose meeting at the Waldorf Astoria we countered in 1972. However subdued compared to the past, Liebling IV was sharply criticized on several fronts (too many stars, too few blacks, too much preoccupation with *The New York Times*) and feminists, on the ground that they lacked a sense of humor, got pies in their faces. Self-satisfaction hardly seemed the rule.

Nor is it likely to become the rule if our readers continue to let us know how they feel—not only about the convention but about the magazine as well.

—RICHARD POLLAK

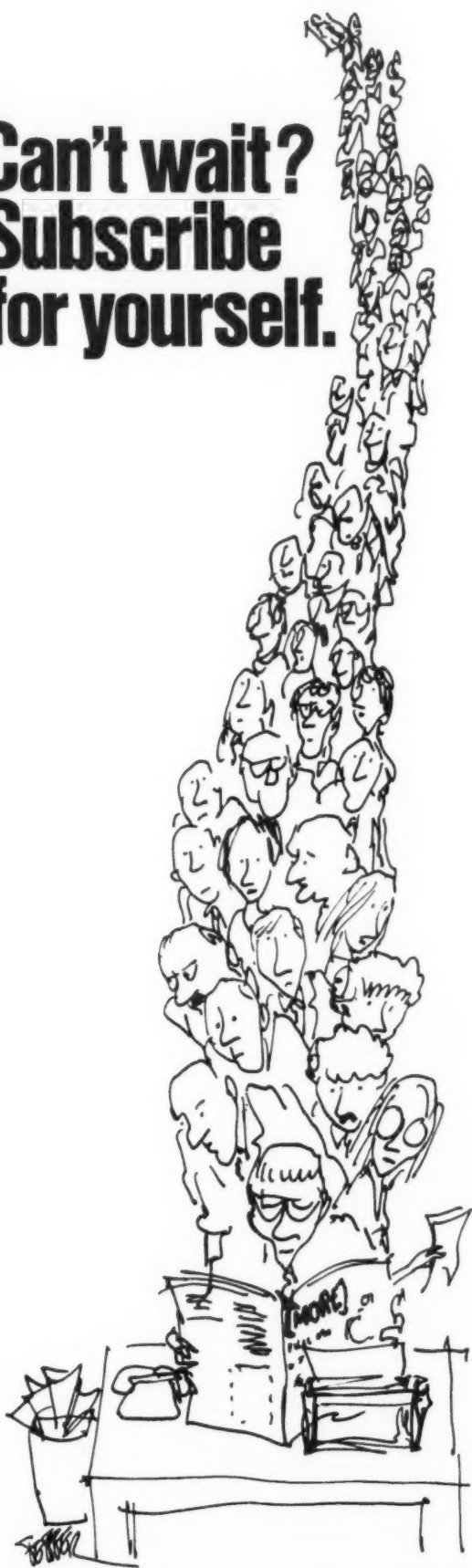






Top row: *New Yorker* film critic Pauline Kael and cartoonist-playwright Jules Feiffer debate the role of the critic as *New York Times* book and television critic John Leonard (with cigarette) listens; *Times* investigative reporter Seymour Hersh looks properly skeptical during a discussion of the CIA and the press; economics writer Emma Rothschild outlines some shortcomings of business reporting; *Esquire* columnist Nora Ephron offers advice to freelance writers; author Gay Talese fields a question during panel on how journalists write about sex. Second row: *The Washington Post's* Carl Bernstein and CBS's Dan Rather await the beginning of their panel on self-censorship; author Studs Terkel captivates his audience after receiving the 1975 A. J. Liebling Award; conspiracy theorist Mark Lane puts forth his view of the John F. Kennedy assassination; some of the more than 1,700 people who attended Liebling IV, during panel on freelancing; *Times* political reporter R. W. Apple answers questions on campaign coverage after panel on the '76 election. Third row: *Times* reporter Charlayne Hunter, "Interface" executive producer Tony Batten and *Mohammed Speaks's* Joe Walker take questions on the media's attitude toward minorities; from left, author Rachel Scott, *Times* economics reporter Eileen Shanahan, *Daily News* columnist Ellen Cohn, WNTS radio's Claudia Polley and *The Washington Star's* Toni House explore the problems of covering traditionally male beats. Bottom row: Jack Anderson associate Les Whitten and *Newsday's* Bob Greene provide some insights into the technique of investigative journalism; author Frances FitzGerald talks about covering the "enemy" in Indochina as author David Halberstam listens.

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## The Art Of The Interview

(continued from page 12)

things about him that had nothing to do with the movie. Finally, he said, well aren't you going to ask me about my movie? And I said, well, I'm not really interested in it. And he said—well, let me just tell you this one thing, I know you'd be interested in it if you just let me talk about it a little bit.

That really pointed out to me the effectiveness of having a conversation with someone. When I come to interview somebody right away, I don't start out by asking questions, I start out by talking. I'll look around, if they're in their house, or someplace they live I'll start talking about the surroundings. "Say, I notice you have an Indian relic over there; well, I have one too and I got mine in such and such." And they'll say, "Oh, really." You establish a rapport that has nothing to do with the subject that you're going to get to and then it's much easier to move into it.

(At this point, Hentoff began taking questions from the floor. Some of them follow.)

**Q.** Village Voice reporter Paul Cowan, in a previous convention session, was discussing people who normally don't have access to the media. Like coal miners in West Virginia and the people in South Boston. He said one problem he had was knowing what to quote that would not get them in trouble, what he felt was safe to quote. And he described the agreements he makes on what to quote and what not to quote, and how to identify the person. Does this also come up with public people?

**REEVES:** When I am doing street reporting, I try not to do a formal interview. If you're talking to an ordinary person in South Boston, if they're not used to dealing with the media, they tell you what they think sounds right rather than what they think. If they think I'm Dick Reeves from *The New York Times*, which is what I used to be, people go, "Oh, my God, *The New York Times*, I better sound right." After all, you are very experienced in what you're doing, and they're totally inexperienced. Because of that, you owe them a lot more than you owe a public figure.

**QUINN:** I spent the last three days with a policeman from the Washington Police Corps. He had never been interviewed before and he was scared to death. He didn't know how to deal with me and I decided the best way to do it would be to set the ground rules first. It was only fair. I explained to him about off the record and not for attribution and all of that, and I made him explain it back to me so he would understand what it meant. And then I said, okay, now you're on your own. I think that's only fair. With public figures, though, it's too bad if they don't know the rules by now. Then it's their problem. I think.

**Q.** Dick, you said earlier that you were going to talk about dealing with subjects when you know they're lying. I wonder if you could get back to that?

**REEVES:** It is my perception that no public figure, I don't care whether it's an actor or a politician, tells the truth, the whole truth, on first outing. You've got to develop a whole series of techniques to deal with that. Preparation is obviously one of them. You're really in trouble if you go into someone who's experienced in dealing with the press without knowing at least as much as he knows about the areas you're most interested in. And, it's a very old saying but it's very true that you should not ask a question unless you know the answer to it. I can't stress that too strongly. In dealing with people who you have reason to believe will try to deceive you—and I would take that to be every politician—you should look very carefully into what they've said on subjects in the past, and without letting them know you know they've answered this question before ask them the same question and see how the answer differs. I think it's very important in dealing with politicians, particularly, to establish the pattern of untruth that they're telling you. In what direction are they deceiving you? Then you find out an awful lot about what they are about at a given time.

The other thing is that as the people we interview

get increasingly sophisticated, and I think they are getting more and more sophisticated, we have an awful lot to learn from legal techniques, from courtroom techniques. In this area, I think we're a little simple-minded. We think that we are very clever because we have a good question. But if you watch good courtroom attorneys work, their questions are often in a long series. The answer to the first five questions may do nothing but box the person in, or they may even be meaningless. I think all reporters could be much more sophisticated about questioning techniques.

**Q.** Some investigative reporters go to a subject and tell him an absolutely horrible story about him. You've got it all down pat and you just want him to comment on it. Then he'll tell you the truth just to disabuse you of the horror story you're going to write. Yours is a fake story, or it's a gross overstatement. Could you tell us a little bit about lying to interview subjects?

**WALLACE:** I try not to do it. I probably am even a little more compassionate with certain interview subjects than I have the reputation for being. First of all, you have to differentiate. When you're doing a straight one-on-one with the Shah of Iran, or Gordon Liddy or whomever, they're perfectly in charge of themselves and they know what they're there for. But just within the last week or two, we've been doing a story about baby-selling in the U.S. and obviously adoptive mothers and natural mothers are not very anxious to talk about that kind of story. Well, we started out trying to get adoptive parents to talk about it, and we were getting none of them to acknowledge that they had bought a baby. Then, there was a couple out on Long Island who adopted a child and the child turned out to be brain damaged six months later and so the adoptive parents returned the kid—broken merchandise. Now, you say to yourself, I know who these people are, I know where they live. I have an interview with the natural mother and her mother, we have pictures of the child. And I called the people on Long Island. They will still not sit down with me, and I began to talk with them and I found myself telling a little bit more than was the fact—in the effort to try to persuade them to sit down on the air and talk to me. Then, I thought: my God, the story doesn't need it. It would be a superb story if somehow I could persuade this couple to sit down and tell me what went through their minds and why they did what they did. But how bad do I really need it? Am I going to lie to them, am I going to try to con them onto the air and then simply hold them up to what is in effect public ridicule? Will the story not be really as effective? You hear a little gasp in the audience when you say they gave the child back. I try not to lie. We are not always seeking the Holy Grail. It depends on how important the story is.

**HENTOFF:** Let us bring it closer to the Holy Grail in reverse, Woodward and Bernstein. Heralds of the Republic though they be—and I mean that—nonetheless, from their book, it seemed to me they did some things that I regard as impermissible. Tampering with the grand jury for one. Doing the kind of things with phone records and credit card records that reporters are very exacerbated at with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies. I think there are some things you do not do.

**REEVES:** I have been very disturbed by the things that spurred the question. I once posed as an assistant attorney. Actually, I didn't say I was one; but they assumed I was one just because I had on a suit and had a briefcase. And the police opened certain records to me which I had no right to see. I feel about that the way I feel about a lot of things on the other side of the fence, on the political and governmental side of the fence. The airing of the real lack of ethics in our business is probably the best thing that can happen, and it will tend to keep us in line. There are enormous temptations when you're a reporter. I like to think I haven't succumbed to very many. But I damn well think that the public ought to know. And I'm glad we are beginning to talk about what it is we really do. ■



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# An 'All-American' Shooting

BY RICHARD WILLING

James L. White, a thin, bearded, 28-year-old black man, with dark glasses over his damaged left eye, stood before Municipal Court Judge William Boyland in Columbus, Ohio last March 12 and listened as sentence was pronounced:

For running a stop sign, \$15; for driving with improper lights, \$10; for speeding, \$25.

Then, with help from his lawyer, White very carefully sat down. The simplest movements were difficult for him. Parts of three .25-caliber bullets were still lodged in his buttocks and upper back, put there by police during the arrest that led to the sentencing. He was legally blind in his left eye from a kick delivered by a Columbus policeman during that incident.

Few newspaper readers in Columbus knew that Judge Boyland had previously found White innocent of two other traffic charges, that an assault charge against him had been withdrawn and that the judge had ordered another assault charge downgraded from a felony to a misdemeanor. For, by this time, reporters had lost interest in the case.

Last September, however, the White story had been big news in Columbus. Back then, the press established White, a wounded Vietnam veteran with no previous criminal record, as a pistol-wielding, reckless-driving desperado who led police on a late-night, high-speed chase through city streets and then, when trapped by the cops, tried to use his car as a battering ram to escape.

On the afternoon of Sept. 1, 1974, a warm, late summer Sunday, White took his two young children for an outing at the Ohio State Fair. After several hours of rides and kiddie amusements, White dropped the children at the home of his estranged wife and returned to the fairgrounds, this time to visit some exhibits alone. He planned to spend a few leisurely hours on the midway before punching in for the midnight shift at The Metal Forge Company, a downtown foundry where he worked as a roll press operator. At about 11:15 p.m., White pulled away from his parking space near the well-lighted fairgrounds lot, forgetting to turn on his headlights.

Less than five minutes later, at an intersection about one mile away, White lay on the ground outside his bullet-riddled car, bleeding from at least three—possibly four—gunshot wounds, blinded in his left eye by a policeman's kick and surrounded by more than 15 heavily armed cops. White, police and one eyewitness differ sharply over what happened between the time White pulled away from his parking space and he was shot. The police account goes this way:

Officers Stanley Lisska and Robert Dent, on uniformed patrol near the fairgrounds, saw White drive off without turning on his lights. After the officers turned on their beacon, White attempted to elude them by a series of quick turns on the short industrial streets of the fairgrounds area. Lisska and Dent radioed for additional cars, which converged on White at the corner of Essex and Cleveland Avenues. Here White's speeding car failed to negotiate a 45-degree turn, spun out of control and struck a utility pole. Lisska's and Dent's car and a squad car driven by Sgt. Jimmy L. Smith came to rest at the front and rear bumpers of White's 1974 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, pinning it against the pole.

When Lisska and Dent left their cruiser and approached White, he began to use his car as a battering ram, throwing it into forward and reverse and crashing it against the police cars at least five times in an attempt to escape. Lisska shouted at White to stop but he ignored the warning. Instead, he backed up again and struck Lisska and Officer Richard McDowell, injuring both slightly.

Columbus police carry six-shot, .38-caliber pistols. Lisska emptied his at White's left rear tire.

Richard Willing won [MORE]'s 1975 Student Media Criticism Award with this article. He graduated in June from the Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs Reporting at Ohio State University.

**Ten months after the fact, newspaper readers in Columbus remain largely unaware that a black Vietnam veteran may have been shot, kicked and partially blinded because he forgot to turn his headlights on.**

then drew a .25-caliber pistol which he owns himself but which is approved for "supplementary" use by the department. Two other officers fired their service revolvers in an attempt to puncture White's tires.

While White's car was still moving, Officer Dent opened the door on the driver's side and tried to drag White out. He jumped back when he saw White, who was slumped down toward the passenger's seat, straighten up suddenly and turn toward him, as if he were aiming a weapon. Lisska, protecting his partner, then fired one round from his .25-caliber pistol at White's rear window. The bullet glanced off without breaking the glass. Without hesitation, Lisska then ran to the driver's side and fired his remaining .25-caliber bullets at White, who had again slumped over toward the passenger's seat. Despite the volley, White then had to be dragged from the car and subdued forcibly by additional officers.

White's account is almost entirely different:

Because of the bright lights of the fair, he did not notice that his headlights were not on until he saw police cruisers pull up behind him on Essex Avenue, about 1,000 yards from the fairgrounds entrance. Fairgoers had parked their cars on both sides of the four-lane street and so he was forced to travel another 500 yards before obeying the police command to pull over.

White stopped his car at the intersection of Essex and Cleveland Avenues and waited to be asked for his license and registration. Instead, he was shot once, without warning, through the open window of his car, by an officer who approached him so quickly that White was unable to get a clear view of him. After that, he slumped down in his seat and lost control of his car, which began to roll forward. He remembers being dragged out of the car and kicked in the eye. He thinks he took at least one other bullet wound while he was on the ground outside his car. He does not recall how he received the other bullet wounds.

Albert Hannah, a white man in his mid-fifties, lived at one corner of the intersection at the time of the incident and witnessed much of it. He had just retired that night when the sound of police sirens, squealing tires and a pistol shot caused him to jump out of bed. Walking to his bedroom window, which commands a clear view of the intersection, Hannah saw White's car come to a full stop at the intersection as two police cruisers pulled in behind him.

Hannah says he then saw police cruiser "99" (actually it was 199) hurry to the scene, go out of control and strike a utility pole approximately 15 yards from his bedroom window. That pole is the same pole police say White struck. The damaged cruiser then backed across the street, caught White's car at the left front fender and began to push it onto a side street. A policeman then approached White's car from the rear. The officer reached the driver's window and without hesitation fired three shots. White slumped over in his seat. Hannah saw no policeman who was injured at the

time of the shots, and no police vehicles, except cruiser 199, which had been damaged.

Today, ten months after the incident, readers of Columbus's three major newspapers are largely unaware that an innocent motorist may have been shot without provocation for the absent-minded act of forgetting to turn on his headlights. Columbus reporters, who wrote their stories in the traditional manner of police journalism—from blotter checks, official statements and press releases—showed a singular ability to garble facts and print official explanations (some of which contradicted each other) without question. Here is how the coverage went:

*The Evening Dispatch* (circ: 201,941) led its Sept. 3 story with the news that felony charges had been filed against White for ramming two officers with his car, then set down the police reconstruction of what was then being billed as a late night "chase." *The Dispatch* noted that five officers fired 21 shots, most of them at the tires and body of White's car, and that White was shot four times only after "officers opened the door of his car and saw a gun in his hand." The story, which carried no byline, noted that the gun was a starter pistol.

Eight days later, on Sept. 11, the *Dispatch* picked up the story through a news briefing by Col. Ralph Drown, the police executive officer. Drown told the paper that Officer Danny Foland had quit the force and that Officer Roscoe Mills, Jr. had been relieved of duty after departmental investigators learned that "the starter pistol may have been placed in the car after the shooting." Drown said, and the paper reported, that the pistol plant had been discovered because of discrepancies in the accounts of officers who were at the scene.

Throughout the *Dispatch* story, there is no indication which officer planted the gun, whether this was done with the collusion of other officers, and, most importantly, why it was done. If Drown was ever questioned on these points, it is not reflected in the *Dispatch* story.

It was not until one week later that the *Dispatch*, prompted by a press release from Police Chief Earl Burden, took up one of these questions. Writing from the handout supplied by Burden at a Sept. 19 press conference, the paper reported that Foland had been the pistol planter and that a third officer had been served with departmental charges for covering up the fact. Foland's motives for fabricating evidence were not included in the press release and thus were not discussed in the newspaper story. The *Dispatch* accepted, apparently at face value, the chief's explanation that the 25-year-old officer "tried to justify an action which didn't need justification."

The morning *Citizen-Journal* (circ: 108,535) had access to the same press conference and briefings as the *Dispatch* and its coverage was practically identical, though complicated by an inability to keep White's age straight from one story to the next. An exception was the *C-J's* Sept. 13 edition, in which White's side of the story was covered in a brief interview.

In an interview with Burden, the paper also reported on Sept. 13 that police had not determined at the time the officer resigned who owned the pistol Foland had planted. But this apparent weakness in the departmental investigation was not questioned or followed up in subsequent stories.

The *Call and Post*, a weekly aimed at Columbus's 110,000 black residents, published an account of the shooting a week after it occurred that was little more than a rewrite of the stories in the two dailies. A second story, published a month after the incident, referred to a "pistol plant frame-up" in its headline but contained no new evidence that police planned to stick White with a gun charge. In fact, the story beneath the headline gave better play to the official police exoneration of the officer or officers who actually shot White, printing the police release without comment and almost verbatim, than to the pistol plant. Despite the tone of



its headlines, the *Call and Post* generally reflected the softball approach of its white counterparts.

The *Columbus Free Press*, an underground paper with no paid staff or regular date of publication, attempted to sort out some of the inconsistencies in two stories on the shooting. Stephen Sterrett, the *Free Press* police reporter, noted that officers had told the *Dispatch* White was shot after they opened the car door. Sterrett wondered in print how police managed to get close enough to open the door while White was supposedly using the vehicle as a battering ram. Indeed, Sterrett was the only reporter to give his readers a hint that police were attempting to plant a motive for their own version of White's behavior. He noted that Burden claimed at his Sept. 19 press conference that White was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident, but that the mixed bag of felony charges and traffic offenses lodged against him did not include drunken driving. None of the major papers reported Burden's allusion to drunkenness.

After covering the White story into October, the papers let it drop. Police quietly reinstated two officers who had been implicated by Foland in the pistol plant but not charged, and shuffled the matter off to the county prosecutor's office, where the investigation of the pistol plant has lain dormant ever since.

Last fall, however, representatives of all four papers told me they planned to cover the case when it came to trial. But when court convened Jan. 31 only the *Citizen-Journal* sent a reporter, and he stayed just through the first day of the three-day trial, which included testimony from Albert Hannah, only then surfacing as a witness, and a trip to the scene of the shooting by the judge himself. The reporter gave five sentences to Hannah, establishing that his testimony contradicted the police version—despite the fact that police had claimed last fall that the only witness to the shooting would back up their story.

But the *C-J* reporter failed to note that Hannah's testimony raised the possibility that White may have been shot by an officer other than Lisska. Hannah insisted that the officer he saw fire wore no hat. Lisska testified that he was in full uniform at the time of the shooting.

The *Dispatch* ignored the trial and covered only the judge's decision, still noting in its Feb. 7 lead that White had been shot in a "wild car chase," despite the fact that testimony at the trial suggested that a "wild chase" had never taken place.

**T**oday, after press releases, nearly two dozen stories, a "comprehensive" police investigation and official and unofficial police briefings, newspaper readers in Columbus still do not know with certainty how many shots were fired during the incident, how many shots were fired at White, how many times he was struck, and which officer or officers did the shooting. Also in question are who was carrying the starter pistol that night and why, if the shooting was justified, an officer saw a need to fabricate evidence. Readers have no idea how Mills and another officer had been implicated in the pistol plant, why they were not charged and why White, by his own account only an absent-minded motorist, would have done the things attributed to him by police.

In its first story, the *Dispatch* reported that police fired 21 shots during the incident. The report of the departmental inquiry into the shooting, released Sept. 19, also said 21 shots were fired. But when I interviewed Capt. Donald H. Bryant in November, he could account with certainty for only 20 shots—15 at the tires and chassis, and five at White himself. Since he prepared the report, I pressed him on the discrepancy. His answer raised doubts that the departmental inquiry was as "comprehensive" as police claimed. "It was 17, no, 16 shots that were fired at the tires, then," Bryant said. "All the shots were accounted for, I know that."

Not quite. At the combination trial and preliminary hearing on the charges against White, police once again accounted for a maximum of only



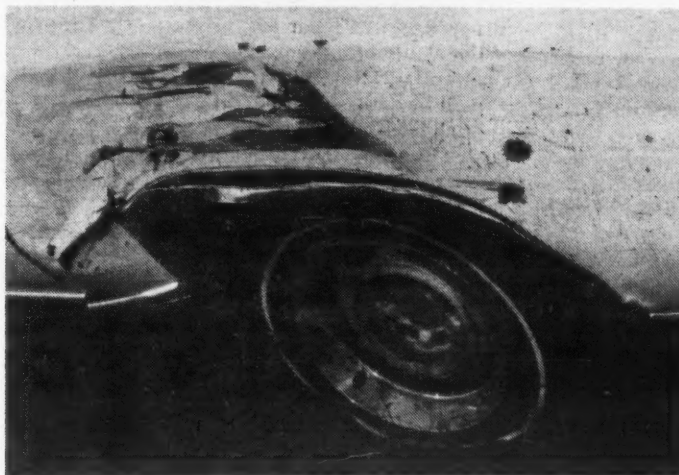
#### EXHIBIT 14

These three pictures of James L. White's 1974 Chevrolet Monte Carlo were taken in mid-September 1974, two weeks after he was shot by Columbus police and before repairs were made. This exhibit shows rear bumper, which police said repeatedly rammed one of their cruisers. The bumper is undamaged.



#### EXHIBIT 17

Front view of undamaged bumper and grille, which police said repeatedly smashed into another cruiser. Damage to left front fender was caused prior to the incident, according to a garage damage estimate.



#### EXHIBIT 6

Closeup of major visible damage on chassis of White's car—two bullet holes, scrape marks and punctured tires.

20 shots. Lisska said he fired six from his .38-caliber service revolver and six (not five, as Bryant said) from his .25-caliber gun, while his partner, Robert Dent, said he fired his service revolver twice. A third officer, who used only his six-shot service revolver, was also involved, according to my interview with Bryant, bringing the maximum number of possible rounds fired to 20.

None of this information ever appeared in print. Reporters accepted the departmental inquiry's report at face value and never challenged Bryant's inability to account for all shots fired, despite White's assertion that he was shot an additional time after being dragged from his car.

The *Dispatch* originally reported that five officers had been involved in the shooting. Bryant told me in November that the actual number was three, and that the wrong number must have come "from the grapevine." But a police liaison officer who testified at White's trial indicated that reporters had been openly briefed by the detective bureau before the initial stories.

The hospital report of the shooting is a revealing document that has never seen light. Bryant told me in November that White had been shot

three times in the back. Initial press accounts that listed the number of White's wounds as four had also come from the sometime erroneous police grapevine, he explained. But a report prepared by Dr. John Stanford, who treated White that night, clearly indicates that White was struck by a fourth bullet, which entered his upper chest rather than his back, and cut a somewhat wider path than the other three. This, plus the fact that the fourth bullet was never recovered from White's car, increases the possibility that White was shot a fourth time, possibly with a .38-caliber service revolver, while on the ground outside his car.

This information, though obtainable, has never been published in a Columbus newspaper.

Physical evidence also raises doubts about the police version of the circumstances surrounding the shooting. Photographs of White's car taken before repairs were made show no damage at all to the front and rear bumpers, which according to police were used repeatedly to batter their cars. The right front fender and side of White's Chevrolet, which police say struck the utility pole, are without damage. The only damage the photos show, beyond a scrape and several bullet holes on



# EXTRA!

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the left side of the chassis, is to the left front fender and headlight. White's lawyer has an estimate from a local garage indicating that that damage was done prior to Sept. 1.

Bryant did not make photos of police cruisers available with his report, and declined to do so during our interview. None was presented at White's trial. Nothing concerning the photographs was reported by the Columbus papers. White's attorney, who has the photos on file, told me he has never been contacted by a representative of any of Columbus's major papers.

Clearly, White appears a victim of fabricated evidence. Police seem to have attempted to plant a motive for their version of White's behavior in the Columbus papers. The *C-J*'s first story indicated that police confiscated some stereo tape decks after White's arrest, although the paper failed in subsequent stories to follow up on the police implication that White may have been a petty thief.

When I asked Bryant about the tape decks in November, he told me that burglary squad detectives were checking them against an inventory of stolen goods. To date, however, no charges relating to the tape decks have been filed. White's attorney says that police confiscated tapes, not tape decks, and that they are all White's property, although his assertions have never been reported.

Last Sept. 19, after the tape deck matter had been dropped by the *C-J*, police suggested for the first time that White was drunk at the time of the incident. When I asked Bryant why White was charged with five lesser offenses and not with drunken driving, he said that blood samples had been taken several hours after the shooting, when the percentage of alcohol in White's blood had fallen below the legal limit. By "projecting backwards," however, Bryant said police were able to determine that the man they shot had been legally drunk.

But to be on the safe side, apparently, police decided to leave the experts out of it. Dr. Stanford, in a stipulation to White's attorney, said he offered to make a blood test when White was admitted to the hospital, but was told by police that the matter had been taken care of.

None of the papers pursued this second "explanation" for White's behavior, despite the fact that it was put forward like an afterthought, nearly three weeks after the original suggestion of petty theft. Even the *Free Press*, which first suggested that White's "drunkenness" might have been a police fabrication, did not pursue this angle.

Bryant told me in November that the departmental inquiry never discovered why Officer Foland planted the pistol. In fact, Bryant said, Foland had never been asked by departmental investigators. The major papers accepted the police explanation that Foland tried to justify an act which needed no justification, and that inquiries into the pistol plant were "not relevant to the shooting of or charges against" White. Police were never pressed on their failure to establish the motive of Foland and the officer or officers who gave him the starter pistol.

There are indications, however, that the investigation of the pistol plant is still a sensitive topic with Chief Burden. At a February panel discussion in Columbus on police reporting, I attempted to question him about it. He suggested that we talk later. When I wrote to the chief requesting an interview, he copped a plea: "In view of continuing litigation I have no desire to make any further statements concerning the 'White case.'"

James L. White, meanwhile, languishes at home, unable to support himself or his family since the night he was shot. He has no idea when the vision in his left eye, which went from 20/20 to 20/500 after he was kicked by a policeman, will improve sufficiently to allow him to operate factory machinery. The short trip to work which he began last Sept. 1 is now ten months long, and the end is still not in sight.

The Columbus city attorney, however, has not forgotten James L. White. In March, his office

invoked a seldom used rule of the Municipal Court to supersede Judge Boyland's instruction that the felony charge against White be refiled as a misdemeanor. He presented the case directly to a grand jury, which recharged White with felonious assault against two police officers. That story, too, remains entirely unreported.

The city attorney's colleague, the Franklin County prosecuting attorney, meanwhile, has been in no hurry to investigate the officer or officers who fabricated evidence against White. An independent investigation projected to take about two weeks last October still has not been produced, and no decision has been made on whether to present the pistol plant case to a grand jury. In the interim, the two officers implicated by Foland have returned to duty, and Foland himself has moved to Florida, making legal action against him difficult at best.

The failure of the press to pursue the White case is particularly instructive when considered against the background of recent history in the "All-American City," as the jointly owned *Dispatch* and *Citizen-Journal* are fond of calling Columbus. That history includes allegations by residents of black neighborhoods and the Ohio State University community that police single them out for harsh and often brutal treatment. Columbus's Academy for Contemporary Problems studied the problem in 1974, and linked the depth of ill-will toward police on the part of blacks and students to these complaints. The Chamber of Commerce then commissioned a panel to study the problem, and that body recommended that a citizen review board be set up to investigate complaints. The idea was rejected by the mayor and police officials.

In February, U.S. District Court Judge Robert Duncan decided a suit charging police brutality by issuing an order that ultimately will make black representation on the police force (now 4.2 per cent) reflect the number of blacks in Columbus—18.5 per cent. Still pending before Duncan is a class action that alleges over 35 instances of police brutality over the past five years and asks the court to appoint a special administrator to run the department and investigate civilian complaints. This case got one-shot coverage from the *Dispatch* and *Citizen Journal*, even though attorneys hired an extra stenographer to supply reporters with daily transcripts.

In Columbus, news of such possible police crime is largely ignored because, as in so many other communities around the nation, the booster mentality prevails. And in such an atmosphere, bankrupt journalistic traditions die hard—if at all. The crush of deadlines discourages police reporters from following stories much beyond the arrest stage. Instead, editors urge them to plow through the daily round of blotter items in search of the bizarre and freakish, ignoring yesterday's stories and the troublesome questions they may have raised.

Like police reporters elsewhere, those in Columbus also fear that any challenge of police information will result in a breakoff with sources in the department. "The police department isn't like any other bureaucracy," a former police shack regular observes. "They don't expect to be approached with skepticism, and if you play it that way you're in trouble. . . . You soon realize what the program is, and you go along."

Some police reporters argue that they have little choice, that background information is often critical to the production of a comprehensible story—especially in a bureaucracy in which technospeak has almost totally replaced English in official documents. But that premise has always been faulty since it rests on the naive notion that the police—or any official—will volunteer information that makes him look bad if only he can do it *sotto voce*. If that were true, readers of Columbus newspapers would doubtless know a good deal more about the James L. White case than they do. ■



THE MAY 1978 EDITION OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

**MAY**

MAY 1978

## production

# Computerized editing... a production revolution

By Tom O'Connell  
Illustration by John P. Sullivan

THE NEW YORK TIMES, the venerable New York Times, has been the first of the nation's major newspapers to make a complete conversion to computerized editing. The move, which was completed last week, was the last of a series of steps that began in 1977 when the paper first adopted a computerized word processing system.

The move to computerized editing was a natural outgrowth of the paper's previous efforts to streamline its operations. In 1977, the paper's circulation was 1.5 million, and its advertising revenue was \$100 million. By 1980, circulation had risen to 2.5 million, and advertising revenue had increased to \$150 million. The paper's management decided that it was time to take a hard look at its operations and see if there were any areas where it could save money without sacrificing quality.

The first step was to streamline the paper's word processing system. In 1977, the paper had a system of typewriters and carbon copies. This was a cumbersome and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized word processing system. This system would allow editors to type directly into a computer, which would then store the text in a file. This would eliminate the need for typewriters and carbon copies, and it would also allow editors to make changes to their text more easily.

The second step was to streamline the paper's editing system. In 1977, the paper had a system of editors who would read and edit the text. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized editing system. This system would allow editors to edit the text directly on the computer. This would eliminate the need for editors to read and edit the text, and it would also allow editors to make changes to their text more easily.

The third step was to streamline the paper's production system. In 1977, the paper had a system of typesetters who would set the type. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized production system. This system would allow the computer to set the type directly. This would eliminate the need for typesetters, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the text more easily.

The fourth step was to streamline the paper's distribution system. In 1977, the paper had a system of deliverymen who would deliver the paper to subscribers. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized distribution system. This system would allow the computer to manage the distribution of the paper. This would eliminate the need for deliverymen, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the distribution schedule more easily.

The fifth step was to streamline the paper's advertising system. In 1977, the paper had a system of salesmen who would sell advertising space. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized advertising system. This system would allow the computer to manage the sale of advertising space. This would eliminate the need for salesmen, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the advertising schedule more easily.

The sixth step was to streamline the paper's circulation system. In 1977, the paper had a system of circulation managers who would manage the circulation of the paper. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized circulation system. This system would allow the computer to manage the circulation of the paper. This would eliminate the need for circulation managers, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the circulation schedule more easily.

The seventh step was to streamline the paper's financial system. In 1977, the paper had a system of accountants who would manage the paper's finances. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized financial system. This system would allow the computer to manage the paper's finances. This would eliminate the need for accountants, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the financial schedule more easily.

The eighth step was to streamline the paper's legal system. In 1977, the paper had a system of lawyers who would manage the paper's legal affairs. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized legal system. This system would allow the computer to manage the paper's legal affairs. This would eliminate the need for lawyers, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the legal schedule more easily.

The ninth step was to streamline the paper's personnel system. In 1977, the paper had a system of human resources managers who would manage the paper's personnel. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized personnel system. This system would allow the computer to manage the paper's personnel. This would eliminate the need for human resources managers, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the personnel schedule more easily.

The tenth step was to streamline the paper's overall system. In 1977, the paper had a system of managers who would manage the paper's overall operations. This was a time-consuming and expensive system. The paper decided to invest in a computerized overall system. This system would allow the computer to manage the paper's overall operations. This would eliminate the need for managers, and it would also allow the computer to make changes to the overall schedule more easily.

The move to computerized editing was a major step for the New York Times. It was a move that would save the paper a great deal of money and time, and it would also allow the paper to make changes to its text more easily. The move was a testament to the paper's commitment to innovation and efficiency.



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# Gonzo Goes To War

Dr. Hunter S. Thompson, national affairs deskman of *Rolling Stone* and premier practitioner of gonzo journalism, will next apply his apocalyptic pen to the last decaying days of Saigon. On assignment from *Stone* editor Jann Wenner, Thompson took to the Indochina trail in April; his reporting will appear in upcoming issue(s) of the magazine. During Thompson's sortie in the war zone, a series of cables, transmitted over the UPI wires, passed back and forth between him and Wenner, and somewhere between Saigon and San Francisco, one of their several exchanges crossed our desk:

TO — JANN WENNER . . . ROLLING STONE . . . SAN FRANCISCO

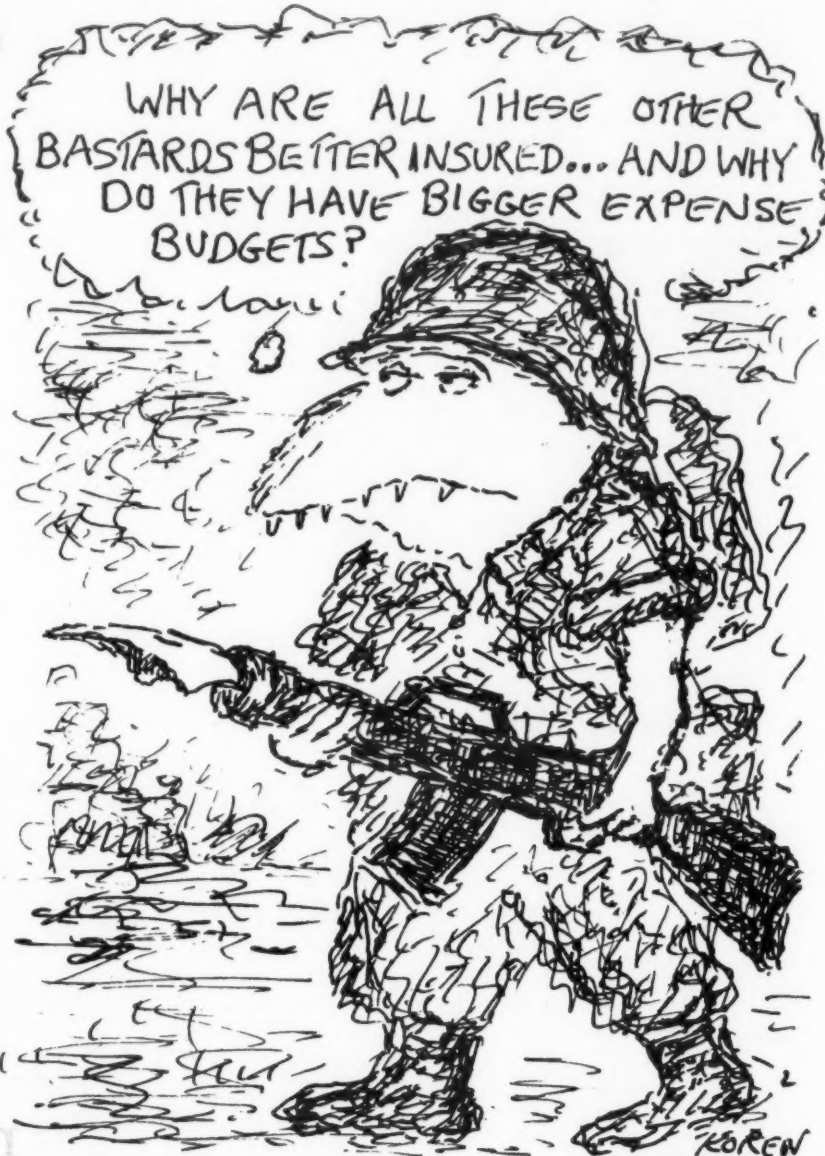
FROM: HUNTER THOMPSON . . .

ON THE ROAD, SOMEWHERE IN INDOCHINA

JANN, YOUR MOST RECENT EMISSION OF LUNATIC, GREED-CRAZED INSTRUCTIONS TO ME WAS GOOD FOR A LOT OF LAUGHS HERE IN SAIGON . . . ESPECIALLY AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING PAID WAR-RISK SALARIES, OPERATING WITH UNLIMITED WAR-RISK EXPENSE-BUDGETS AND WHOSE EMPLOYERS ARE PAYING THEIR SPECIAL SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLAR A DAY WAR-RISK LIFE INSURANCE . . . WHILE MY OWN LIFE INSURANCE POLICY WAS AUTOMATICALLY CANCELLED ON THE DAY I GOT HERE AND YOUR OBVIOUSLY DELIBERATE FAILURE TO REPLY IN ANY REPEAT ANY WAY TO MY NUMEROUS REQUESTS BY PHONE, CABLE AND CARRIER FOR SOME CLARIFICATION VIS-A-VIS WHAT THE FUCK I MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE PAID FOR WHATEVER I'M DOING OUT HERE MAKES A STUPID, DIMESUCKER'S JOKE OF YOUR IDEA THAT I'M GOING TO LOUNGE AROUND OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR AT MY OWN EXPENSE AND WITH NO IDEA AS TO WHAT I MIGHT WRITE, ON SPEC, ABOUT YOUR MYTHICAL CHOPPER EVACUATION AND NOTES ON MY SUMMER VACATION IN "TENT" CITY AT SUBIC BAY. YOU OUGHT TO READ MY COPY FROM LAST WEEK BEFORE YOU START JABBERING ABOUT WHAT I SHOULD DO NEXT. OR DID YOU EVER RECEIVE MY COPY FROM LAST WEEK?

ANYWAY, MY CURRENT PLANS ARE STILL TO DO WHATEVER'S RIGHT, ACCORDING TO MY OWN JUDGMENT AT THE TIME, AND AT THE MOMENT THAT MEANS LEAVING HERE SATURDAY IF THE CURRENT CALM HOLDS AND YOU CAN RAM SUBIC BAY FAR INTO THE NETHER REACHES OF YOUR LOWER INTESTINE. I HAVE ALL THE MATERIAL WE AGREED I SHOULD HAVE ON QUOTE THE LAST DAYS OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN SAIGON UNQUOTE AND NOW I'M GOING SOMEWHERE TO WRITE IT. THE ONLY ROUND-EYES LEFT TO EVACUATE FROM SAIGON NOW ARE THE SEVERAL HUNDRED PRESS PEOPLE WHO ARE NOW TRYING TO ARRANGE FOR THEIR OWN EVACUATION AFTER THE U.S. EMBASSY PULLS OUT WITH THE LAST OF THE FIXED-WING FLEET AND LEAVES THE PRESS HERE ON THEIR OWN. NEEDLESS TO SAY, IF THAT SCENARIO DEVELOPS IT WILL INVOLVE A VERY HIGH PERSONAL RISK FACTOR AND ALSO BIG GREEN ON THE BARRELHEAD FOR ANYONE WHO STAYS; AND UNLESS THE ONE-THIRTIES START HITTING SAIGON BEFORE SATURDAY THAT IS THE OUTLOOK. IF YOU WONDER WHY I CAN'T EXPLAIN THIS SITUATION ANY FURTHER RIGHT NOW—WELL, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO WONDER, BECAUSE I CAN'T. YOU COULD CHECK WITH KLEIN AT NEWSWEEK AND SEE WHAT LOREN SAYS ABOUT HIS OWN SITUATION AND CASH NEEDS, AND MAYBE THAT WILL TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT MY REPEAT MY SITUATION, CASH WILL DEFINITELY BE A FACTOR, AND SINCE I REALIZE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF A TELEPHONE CALL TO ME HERE AT THE HOTEL IN SAIGON, I AM NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF GETTING ANY MORE EXPENSE MONEY . . . UNLESS I GET A CALL OR A CABLE FROM LYNN REPEAT FROM LYNN, [Lynn Nesbit, Thompson's agent in New York] CONFIRMING SOME UP-DATED MONEY ARRANGEMENT SHE MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE MADE WITH YOU. OUR ORIGINAL AGREEMENT, AS YOU KNOW, DID NOT INCLUDE PRESS-EVACUATION COVERAGE OR SIX UNPAID MONTHS OF HOUSE-ARREST WHEN SAIGON FINALLY FALLS. [Tim] CROUSE SAID HE MIGHT LIKE TO HANDLE THAT ASPECT OF THE STORY, AND I HOPE YOU FORWARDED MY WIRE TO HIM YESTERDAY.

AS FOR ME, I HAVE A PIECE TO WRITE AND I FIGURE THAT SOONER OR LATER YOU'LL FIND SOME COST-CUTTING METHOD FOR COMMUNICATING THE DEADLINE-DAY TO ME C-O NEWSWEEK IN HONG KONG. MEANWHILE, UNLESS YOU CAN ARRANGE ON YOUR END SOME WAY FOR ME TO BUY INTO THE POST-EMBASSY EVAC PLOT, MY OPTIONS ARE SO LIMITED THAT AT THE MOMENT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO LEAVE SATURDAY AND PONDER MY NEXT MOVE FROM WHEREVER I CAN GET A FLIGHT TO. IN CLOSING I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR ALL THE HELP.



Edward Koren

THE FOLLOWING IS FOR TRANSMISSION TO HUNTER S. THOMPSON OF ROLLING STONE, CARE OF SAIGON UPI OFFICE.

HUNTER: MY MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN WAR COVERAGE AND RUNNING MILITARY PRESS CORPS, INVOLVEMENT IN REVOLUTIONS, AND GENERAL TALENT FOR BLITZKRIEG ACTION TELLS ME THAT YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION AS TO WHEN TO LEAVE SAIGON FOR A SAFE ZONE. I DO NOT WANT COVERAGE OF SAIGON AFTER THE OFFICIAL EVACUATION AND DO NOT WANT YOU TO STAY UNLESS YOU PERSONALLY WANT TO. YOUR INSURANCE EXPIRES ONCE THE EMBASSY CLOSES. I CAN'T AFFORD 25 GRAND FOR A POST EVACUATION PIECE. THINK IT WOULD BE UNWISE AND UNSAFE FOR YOU TO STAY SINCE YOU DON'T KNOW THE CITY OR THE LOCAL CITIZENS OR HAVE ANY TIME-TESTED CREDENTIALS WITH THE SOON TO BE NEW OWNERS.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO GET A PHONE CALL THROUGH OTHERWISE I WOULD HAVE CERTAINLY CALLED UP FOR A SPEED CRAZED CHAT ABOUT WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IN THE SITUATION WITH WHICH I'M TOTALLY FAMILIAR AND . . . JESUS, THE OVERSEAS OPERATOR JUST SAID THAT ALL SAIGON NUMBERS BEGINNING NINE ARE NOW COMPLETELY OUT . . . SO I GUESS WE CAN'T HAVE THAT TELEPHONE CALL AND I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO NEGOTIATING THE PRICES AND THE EXPENSES ON THE PIECE. WOULD LIKE YOU TO RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO RATHER THAN WRITE IN HONG KONG OR VISIT LAOS SINCE THE PIECE IS ON THE LAST DAYS OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE IN SAIGON, AND SEEING THE HALF-MAD AMBASSADOR FLEEING WITH THE FLAG UNDER HIS ARM WOULD MAKE A NICE KICKER. IF YOU GO THROUGH HONG KONG, WIRE AND CALL FROM THERE AND WE CAN SETTLE DEADLINES THEN.

ON THE FINANCIAL FRONT, OUR AGREEMENT WAS FIVE GRAND FOR WHATEVER YOU CAME UP IN THE WAY OF A MAJOR PIECE ON THE LAST DAYS, WHETHER ONE PIECE OR IN SEVERAL DISPATCHES. IF WE HAVE ONE DISPATCH AND ONE MAJOR PIECE, THIS OBVIOUSLY CALLS FOR AN INCREASE BUT WHAT IS THE POINT OF WORRYING THAT RIGHT NOW. MEANWHILE, YOUR DISPATCH IS IN PRINT AND LAURA'S TURNED OUT FINE AND IS ALSO IN. SIGNED—JANN.



# LETTERS

(continued from page 3)

## No Vacancy

The news item about *New Dimensions* magazine in your most recent issue [Hellbox—June 1975] is misleading and outdated in several important respects:

1) The article implies that Merle Wolin was fired from *New Dimensions* because she sent out a mailing criticizing the editors. Nonsense. Ms. Wolin did have some criticisms of the magazine's structure; some of them were valid, and we made changes accordingly. But a radical magazine—or a radical anything—which fired someone solely because she or he offered criticisms would not be worthy of the name. Rather, the *New Dimensions* staff felt it could not work with Ms. Wolin any longer because she announced that she was ceasing work and would not resume unless the magazine met various demands she was making. No group can function when one of its members starts issuing ultimatums; we are confident that any other group of reasonable people would have acted the same way. [MORE]'s account neglects to mention that the decision to terminate Ms. Wolin's relationship with the magazine was joined in by two women working here as well as the three men mentioned in the article.

2) The new editor's job mentioned in the article is not "still vacant"; it was filled, by a woman, well before that issue of [MORE] went to press. Even earlier, *New Dimensions* had hired a woman as art director, something you also did not bother to mention in your article. . . .

—Adam Hochschild  
New Dimensions  
San Francisco, Calif.

## Star Struck?

At the [MORE] counter-convention this year, Ellen Frankfort and Shirley Jonas sat down to await the start of a panel. A young man wearing staff insignia told them to get up. The seats, he said, were reserved for the panelists. After some discussion, the two intruders vacated the seats. Then Mike Wallace sat down. He was not a panelist, and this was pointed out to the apparatchik. He replied:

I'm in awe of power. I don't tell Mike Wallace what to do. There are two kinds of people in this world: people you can push around and people you don't. It's as simple as that. I don't agree with this uppity feminism. It's women who have fucked things up here.

The gratuitous rap at feminism was in keeping with the tone of the convention, wherein:

- Women's issues were segregated into a Woman's Day.
- For those who could, on a working day, attend

## Furthermore

(continued from page 27)

plus that of the economy have come to lie in the bottom of their stomachs like a liquid explosive and their anger—unlike the destruction of everything positive in their lives—is perceived as relevant to the quality of American life.

So, the black part of the American experience may well be pulled briefly into focus again before it is pressed once more to the back alleys of the mind. But the story of an eighth of the nation's people struggling with its soul won't go away. It just won't be told properly.

Ramsey Clark had a powerful reporter's sense in that church basement in 1965. He knew there were other realities besides the one in which he lived and that to find out about them, he had to listen to and learn from those who knew things he did not know. Until the nation's editors learn what that lawyer knew instinctively, the struggle to cover the racial story properly will continue to be waged exactly where the rest of America's racial struggle is fought: just there, between the ears of white people.

this session, there was no advance program information.

- A glance at the program (excluding the Token Female Panel), showed that of the 98 panelists, 16 were women.

- The Saturday Night Star Panel consisted of 7 men and zero (count 'em) women. The moderator explained, when asked, that two women had been invited, but could not make it.

The anti-woman bias was to be expected. Journalism is rife with this, and [MORE] is no exception. But this obviously was not the flunky's main concern. The worship of media stardom, which [MORE] ostensibly rejects, seems to have taken hold of this young man with astonishing tenacity. Something is wrong here. A student intern, taken on to learn the tenets of journalism criticism, has

not learned his lesson . . . or learned it too well at [MORE]. For, in truth, a convention that has reserved seats, a \$20 entry fee, and a star-studded cast, is hardly countering the conventions of this profession or any other.

—Hal Davis  
New York, N.Y.

*Editor's reply:* We hope our young intern, who blew up in the heat of a difficult moment, will abandon some of his silly sexist notions as he grows older. We hope, too, that our correspondent will eventually see that it is equally silly to indict the magazine and the convention because of one incident. For the record, the Woman's Day was scheduled because many women sought it—which, ironically, may have made us overlook the importance of including more of them on subsequent panels.

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\*Walter Dean Burnham, Professor of Political Science, M.I.T.



# THE BIG APPLE

MOON MULLINS



## My Bookie Reads Dondi

While we were filling up at a friendly Texaco station on Long Island, the manager volunteered to give us "a sure thing on the ponies." He said that the clues were to be found in the "Moon Mullins" cartoon strip in the *Daily News*. "If the guy signs his name in the first box, it's WIN, second SHOW and third PLACE. Then you divide the picture with the signature in it into nine boxes and whatever box the signature falls into gives you the race. To get the horse you look for the number of open eyes in the strip. The track is always Aqueduct. It doesn't work all the time but the odds are with you," he solemnly proclaimed.

Later, a racing aficionado friend of ours said that he had made more than \$500 from a horse picked out of the strip. But, he explained, "It applies to Roosevelt, not Aqueduct."

To get the straight story, we called Ferd Johnson in California, who draws the 52-year-old comic strip, one of the oldest in the business, which appears in some 80 newspapers around the country. Johnson said that thousands of readers place bets on clues garnered from his strip, and that over the last 15 years he's gotten hundreds of letters asking him to explain his "code." "I tell them that there *isn't* any code but they don't believe me," said Johnson. "I draw the strip about six weeks in advance and couldn't possibly know what horses are going to be running at a given track. I guess it started because the strip ran for 45 years on the front page of the sports section of the *Chicago Tribune*." Johnson confessed that when he lived in Chicago he frequented the track as much as the next fellow, but unlike many of his readers, he'd never managed to make any money out of it.

Looking into the matter further, we discovered that the combination of horse tips and handicaps in the daily comics is an old and honored tradition. Bill Fisher, who originated "Mutt and Jeff" in 1907 (now syndicated in over 300 papers), first started the series as a handicap cartoon in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. After a year of handicapping, the cartoon became so popular that Fisher scratched the tips and made it into a strip running across the whole page, the first of its kind. But, ac-

## CHING CHOW®



cording to his successor, Al Smith, Fisher used to sneak in racing tips even after the strip was no longer officially a handicap sheet.

Through the fifties and early sixties Ken Kling did a strip called "Joe and Asbestos," first for the *New York World* and then for the *Telegram*, in which he openly handicapped horses. Since then nobody has done a handicap cartoon in New York, but you can't convince the readers of that. Bill Gallo of the *Daily News* and president of the Cartoonists' Society, said that a lot of readers relied on his drawings for tips on horses or the numbers. "There's nothing to it, but you can't tell a horse player or a numbers player that. They concoct their own ways of looking at the world." According to Gallo the *News* strip, "Chin Chow" is particularly favored by numbers players, who take their clues from the number of buttons and eyes in the cartoon.

Gallo tells the story about how one day he opened his mail and found a twenty dollar bill along with a note saying, "Thanks for the tip." It was from a reader who had made a big score following clues he'd found in one of Gallo's sports cartoons. Gallo reluctantly turned the money over to the legal department which sent it back to the reader, who, presumably, after deciphering the next day's code in the comics, put it on another horse. —BLAKE FLEETWOOD

## Now You See Him . . .

Demonstrations happen so often in New York City that the media barely bothers covering some of them. A recent example was a parade during National Farm Workers Week. On

Insistent pony players swear that racing tips abound in the Moon Mullins comic strip. Numbers players rely on Chin Chow.

Sunday May 11, the *Times* reported that on May 10, 5,000 farmworker supporters marched down Seventh Avenue to Union Square for a rally. They were "led by Representative Bella S. Abzug, Manhattan Democrat, and Gloria Steinem." At the Union Square rally, the *Times* also reported, "Farm Workers president, Cesar Chavez, spoke to the crowds, urging support in their long battle to gain representation among farm workers on the West Coast." The same day, the *Daily News* reported that 800 demonstrators "led by United Farm Workers President Cesar Chavez," marched to the rally.

In fact, Gloria Steinem did not march, although she did speak at the rally. And Chavez neither led the march nor addressed the rally. He was in California May 10.

—JUDITH COBURN

## Too Grisly

Public television stations, largely ignored by the public they are supposed to serve, usually would be happy for a little publicity or controversy about their shows. But at WNET/Channel 13 in New York, a three-year-old Swedish documentary about Harlem, scheduled for nationwide broadcast May 19, generated so much controversy the station was forced to withdraw the show. The film, *Harlem: Voices, Faces*, was purchased and edited from three hours down to 90 minutes at a cost of \$23,000—a good price by television standards. It had already been seen in numerous European and communist countries and had won a Swedish prize for the best television documentary of 1974.

However, because the white filmmakers had focused on the horrors of life in Harlem, the station planned to follow the showing with a half-hour discussion. Four eminent blacks were booked to balance any misimpressions. Then, with everything set, WNET announced the show with a press release.

When Tony Brown, producer of WNET's "Black Journal," read the release, he was horrified. "One out of two persons killed by narcotics is black," the release said. "Eight times more people are murdered in Harlem than in the rest of New York." Brown read on: "There is a sort of happy irresponsibility, a warm sensuality, with soul-pop and

laughter—the pretty boys with the fast money, the tough threads, the Cadillacs, the fly women." Brown says he called WNET's public relations department to say the release was "racist," and arranged to see the film. Then he rushed a memo to WNET president John Jay Iselin asking him to cancel the show, sending copies to all four panelists. The Swedes' portrait of Harlem, Brown argued, "was two times removed from reality" because the Swedes were neither Americans nor blacks. He conceded the events portrayed in the film were factual, but claimed that "so many black people who need positive images so desperately to overcome the despair the film so ominously reveals will be even more psychologically destitute."

Also on WNET's mailing list were the panelists scheduled to discuss the film. After reading the station's press release, Hunter College sociology professor Joyce Ladner dropped off the panel, stating she would never again agree to talk about a film she hadn't seen. James Turner, head of Afro-American studies at Cornell University, did likewise. Neither had seen the film. That left the panel with Hilton Clark, a Harlem resident and partner with his father, Kenneth, in political research, and Roger Wilkins, a member of the *New York Times* editorial board. Both of them saw the film.

Hoping to hold on to the linchpin of its panel discussion, WNET upped Wilkins's moderating fee from a token \$100 to what Wilkins says was \$1,000. Whatever the amount, it was enough to start Wilkins rethinking his role. He, too, resigned, having decided he would not facilitate the station's plans to air a film he had originally found "awful" and that was being prompted with a press release he considered "dreadful."

The station had no better luck trying to assemble a substitute panel of big-name political blacks, among them Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel, and Human Rights Commissioner Eleanor Holmes Norton. When Sutton, WNET's replacement for Wilkins, saw the film and declined to appear, the station's hopes for a panel faded.

All this was happening the week of May 12, and *The New York Times*, getting wind of the controversy, had two reporters on the job. In the May 13 *Times*, Les Brown reported that Robert Kotlowitz, WNET's vice president for programming, was charging Tony Brown with organizing black opposition to the film without ever having seen it. Tony Brown insists, however, that he had seen the film and says Les Brown had never talked to him for the article. The *Times* also quoted Kotlowitz as saying, "I don't see how we can possibly pull the film." While readers were savoring that spunkiness, Kotlowitz's boss Iselin was pulling the film, though he called the move a

New York

11

1010 WINS

New York Post

9

Amsterdam News

WNBC-TV 4

DAILY NEWS

WHD

WCBS NEWSRAD 88

THE NEW YORKER

7

VOICE

WNEW-TV 5

VARIETY

13

The New York Times

02



# THE BIG APPLE

DAILY NEWS

WWD

WCBS NEWSRAD 88

THE NEW YORKER

7

New York

1010 WINS

New York Post

New York News

9

Amsterdam News

WNBC-TV 4

postponement. "In the interest of fairness and understanding," Iselin said, "WNET/13 believed that the film should be appropriately framed." WNET's "frame" was its panel, and without panelists there would be no show.

Three days later *Times* TV critic John O'Connor wrote that WNET had buckled under black pressure in a squabble he decided nobody was winning. Tony Brown's own "Black Journal," he said, had turned into a black version of the Johnny Carson show, and not long ago black leaders—particularly the more militant ones—would have loudly endorsed the Swedes' documentary.

Virtually the only black still endorsing the screening of the film was Hilton Clark. Clark persuaded WNET to show the documentary to another group of blacks. Out of this screening came the Ad Hoc Committee of Harlem Residents for the Film and a letter to WNET management signed by 20 people. "Calling the film detrimental to blacks is much akin to blaming the messenger for the bad news he brings," the letter said. "We feel that the film should be shown so as not to continue to sweep these realities under the rug."

Clark and his committee's wish will apparently be granted. The station eventually intends to show the film, but only with "framing." That could mean an additional film, showing the Harlem ignored by the Swedes, or at long last a panel.

—MICHAEL RODDY

## Puck's Bad Boy?

For the past two years, the college hockey writer at *The New York Times* has been a lawyer who represents amateur hockey players in their negotiations with pro clubs. Arthur Kaminsky, who is also associate editor of *The Intercollegiate Hockey Newsletter*, has been writing occasional Sunday *Times* pieces for stringer fees. Kaminsky declined to name the players he represents, but he confirmed that one of them is Dave Peace, an All-American wing for Cornell. In the Dec. 29, 1974 *Times*, Kaminsky wrote: "This year's edition of the Big Red [Cornell] is primarily a Canadian-bred contingent with an exceptionally talented group of forwards led by Dane Groulx, a junior center who was high scorer last year, and Dave Peace, a wing."

"I don't represent them until after they've graduated," says Kaminsky. "College hockey is a sport that gets virtually no publicity, and the fact that I've been able to do it for the *Times* has been fun. Helping the players subsequently has been fun, too. What I've been trying to do is help college hockey. I don't consider myself a journalist, really."

Since college players may not sign contracts until completing school, technically Kaminsky does not write about any players while they are his clients. But covering the hockey beat

nonetheless provides an opportunity for agent and pro prospect to make contacts that could prove useful in the future. For example, Peace says Kaminsky took him out to dinner during the season. "It was obvious what he had in mind," says Peace.

*Times* sports editor James Tuite, who was not aware that Kaminsky represents athletes, said he sees no conflict of interest. "Half the athletes he represents never went to college—what do you make of that?" Tuite asked. "On the other hand,

he's operating in such an innocuous amateur sport that I find it hard to get excited. However, I'll probably be talking to the managing editor." Tuite did so, and later reported that managing editor A.M. Rosenthal had said, "We will do what we think is right regardless of what anybody else thinks."

—JIM KAPLAN

## Fish Story

A surprised shop steward at the *Bergen Record* (Hackensack, N.J.) became ill when he discovered

a freshly decapitated fish inside a pneumatic tube normally containing news copy. The fish had been a gift from reporters to an editor leaving for a holiday in Japan, where raw fish is considered a delicacy. Bob King, a night news editor, severed the head in the editorial men's room, wrapped it in copy paper, and sent the body down the tube to the composing room marked HTK (Head to Come). King sent the promised part down five minutes later.

—MICHAEL ANTONOFF

## Where The Elite Meet To Eat



N.Y. Times

Newsweek

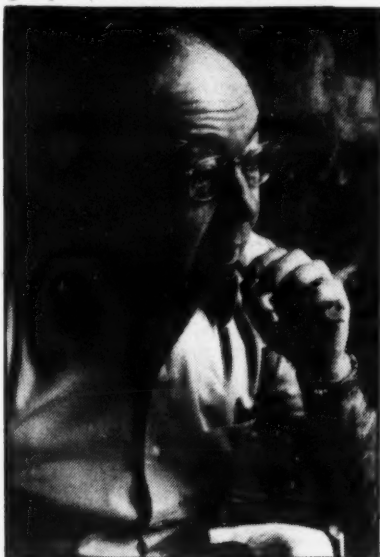
Newsweek

We last left the Eastern Media Establishment on the spike at *Fortune* magazine [The Big Apple—June 1975]. In an article about the press, *Fortune* associate editor Paul Weaver had written that many top news executives are friends, and backed himself up with a quote from Richard Clurman, *Time's* former chief of correspondents. "They have similar temperaments, they eat with one another and talk to one another, and they entertain each other in their homes," Clurman said. This passage was struck from Weaver's piece, apparently by Hedley Donovan, editor-in-chief of all Time Inc. publications.

We have now found evidence which suggests not only that Weaver and Clurman knew what they were talking about, but also that Donovan, when he picked up his red pencil, may simply have been wreaking a small revenge on a group which had left him out. Our source is page 354 of Theodore H. White's latest book, *Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon*. Listing his acknowledgments, White says, "A small seminar that meets in New York from time to time has provoked me continuously to confusion and political resolution. To the members of that seminar my thanks: Richard Clurman, A. M. Rosenthal, Arthur Gelb, William F. Buckley, Osborn Elliott, and Irving Kristol."

Inquiries as to the exact nature of this seminar—whose membership proves at least that the press establishment is not the liberal monolith Spiro Agnew called it—brought varied responses. *New York Times* managing editor Rosenthal said he was not interested in discussing it. "It's a matter of the highest secrecy," said Irving Kristol, co-editor of *The Public Interest*. "It would be a breach of faith on my part to give you even the smallest detail." Instead, Kristol suggested that we "ask

The lunch bunch, left to right: Arthur Gelb, Irving Kristol, William F. Buckley, Richard Clurman, A.M. Rosenthal and Osborn Elliott. Below, appreciative group member Theodore H. White.



Gjon Mili

Teddy. He raised it, he can do the talking."

But "Teddy" insisted that the only person who could talk about the "entirely private" group—which he said met "regularly" but was "unorganized" and "just happened"—was Clurman. "Dick got it together, he knows more about it than I do," said White.

Although loath to claim founder's credit, Clurman said he'd be glad to recount the group's history. "Five or six years ago, a couple of us—Bill Buckley, Abe Rosenthal, myself—were having lunch," Clurman recalled. "Five or six weeks later we did it again, and I think Oz Elliott [*Newsweek's* editor-in-chief] joined us. We've met once every six or seven weeks that entire period and never expanded." The others joined in a hazy sequence, ending with White. "Ted came in a year or so later. I wrote the memo, but we all agreed to invite him," said Clurman.

Arthur Gelb, metropolitan editor of the *Times*, says the "seminar" is "just a group of guys who like to have lunch. I go to these things all the time."

Now and again the guys open ranks to guests—often working reporters and editors. The regulars take turns hosting each other at Clurman's, Buckley's or Rosenthal's homes, or at the *Times*, the Time-Life Building, or the Century Club (the achieving Establishment's canteen).

The group's first public recognition came a few years ago in a *Newsweek* promotion film called *One Week*, which purports to be a typical week in the life of Osborn Elliott. "Part of the job is meeting people," the narration explains, when Elliott has gotten as far as Wednesday. The camera makes a deft pan across Buckley's living room, picking up Clurman, Rosenthal, Buckley, Elliott, Gelb, and Kristol in an "informal idea exchange."

After we first spoke, Gelb, who had not seen page 354, went home, looked it up, and called back the next day to make sure we understood that White "was joking when he said he was confused." Gelb went on, "I'd like to say something smart-alecky if you don't mind," and read a prepared statement:

"I'm delighted that Teddy White has recognized our eclectic little group of egomaniacs. No wonder he's confused—so are all the other members. He was joking, of course, when he called it a seminar. The group is haphazardly arranged and nobody ever concedes a point or learns anything. But the food at Buckley's is fantastic."

As for the meals elsewhere, Gelb said they were "terrible—including at the distinguished *New York Times* lunchroom"—where he takes everyone when it's his turn.

—ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM

VOICE

WNEW-TV 5

VARIETY

13

The New York Times

12



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## From Silence To Silence

BY ROGER WILKINS

Ten years ago, while most of the nation's press was still brooding over the meaning of Watts, a group of residents of that community gathered in the basement of a Baptist church to explain to a federal team headed by Ramsey Clark why the city had exploded. That meeting was a novel experience for most of the black participants because it was the first time they had ever seen a powerful white man go out of his way to try to learn something from ordinary black people.

Clark regarded the people in that room as possessors of a valid human experience of which he had limited knowledge. Setting his preconceptions aside, he treated them not as objects of his own fantasies, but simply as human beings who knew and felt things beyond his own experience. As a result, he learned a great deal about the extent of black urban deprivation, the nature of the racism that produced it and rage which it engendered, and that was to serve him well in the Justice Department during the ensuing years of urban rioting.

Before he left Los Angeles that summer, Clark and an assistant were invited to meet with Otis Chandler and some of the editors of *The Los Angeles Times*. During that meeting, the news people acknowledged that they had known little of Watts or of how to cover it. Drawing on their experience in the church a few nights earlier, the lawyers suggested simply that the *Times* send some reporters—blacks and Chicanos among them—out to the minority communities to listen to the people, learn the texture of the neighborhoods, report accurately and stick with the story. That advice, essentially to take poor minority people seriously, though tendered diffidently at the time, has worn well over the years.

I recall all that now, a decade later, because "long hot summer" speculation is beginning to pop up for the first time in several years. It rests, as far as I can tell, simply on the raw numbers of the recession. Beyond reasoning that a black teen-age unemployment rate exceeding 40 per cent must mean trouble, most editors seem to have little more grasp of the problem now than the editors of *The Los Angeles Times* had back in 1965.

In fact, editors may now be less capable of handling the racial story effectively because they think they've been covering it all along and there is a tendency to overestimate how much they actually know. News executives were able to face the deficiencies in their racial reporting candidly in 1965, but a new generation of racial attitudes and fantasies have taken hold since then.

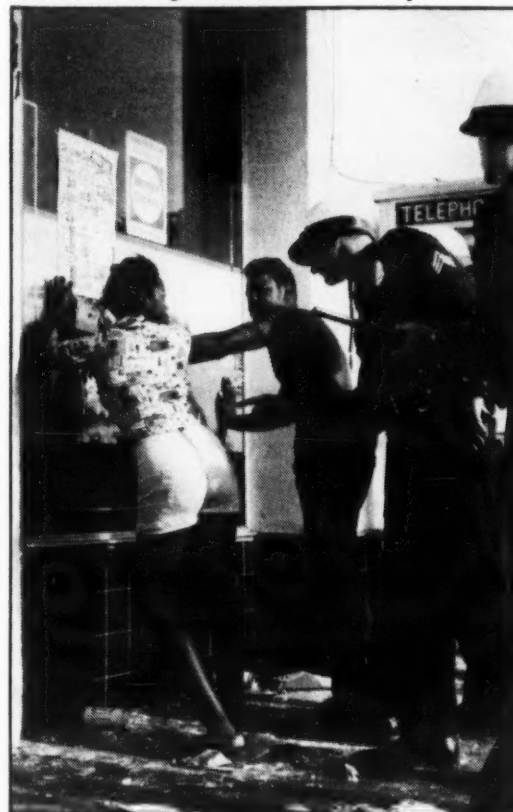
Sometime early in this decade, fear of blacks diminished. When it became clear that blacks weren't going to destroy the cities and that the Black Panther Party and Angela Davis could not shake the roots of the Republic, blacks became unfashionable and coherent coverage of their lives and of issues affecting them virtually disappeared from news columns. The continuing and evolving story of the black experience and its relationship to the rest of America thus fell victim to the trendy and episodic treatment that characterizes so much

of the performance of this country's press.

On racial issues, the press seemed to adopt former Vermont Sen. George Aiken's prescription for getting out of Vietnam: "Declare victory and withdraw." Thus, curiously, while Great Society programs designed to ameliorate the plight of the black urban poor were being declared failures, newspapers and magazines were so busy discovering a large new black middle class that Vernon Jordan, executive director of the National Urban League, felt compelled to say in *Newsweek's* "My Turn" column that it wasn't so.

In noting that after all the advances of the sixties, fully 40 per cent of the black population was still mired in poverty or was nearly poor, Jordan pointed out that it took a kind of statistical newsspeak to establish a sizeable black middle class. The major economic movements by those blacks who did benefit from the sixties advanced them to the bottom levels of newly opened job lines—precarious footholds which are already beginning to crumble under the weight of the recession. The middle class discovered by the press required for its bulk the inclusion of a lot of people in tenuous economic circumstances who, had they been white, would have been classified as working class.

Jordan was struggling with the fact that America, having discovered the race problem in



the sixties and finding it too hard, replaced out-moded fantasies with new ones which were suited to shunting the whole mess aside in the seventies. Thus, any differences between 1965 and 1975 are more apparent than real. Then, as now, the white mind was forcing powerful distortions on reality. Then, the distortion involved the assumption by whites that the racial issue was really not that important and consequently that there was little of value to be learned from blacks.

Now, bolstered by the visibility of "qualified" or "exceptional" blacks, the updated fantasy suggests that despite persistent high rates of black poverty, consistent failures to educate black children, rising crime rates and the steady erosion of the foundations of urban life from job attrition, shrinking tax bases and white flight, America has broken the back of its racial problem. That being so, there is little more to do and the insights of blacks are unnecessary. The circle is thus closed—from silence to silence.

Recently, a powerful, sensitive and exceptionally candid news executive listened to a black businessman describe the problems in his community in much the same way blacks in Los Angeles had talked about their city a decade earlier. Finally, the executive spoke with deep concern re-

**"The black part of the American experience may well be pulled briefly into focus again before it is pressed once more to the back alleys of the mind. But the story won't go away. It just won't be told properly."**

flected both on his face and in his voice. "You know," he said, "black problems are practically invisible now. We don't see them anymore."

Somewhere out there, there had been stories about the excitement and joy felt by people learning for the first time the skills required to help manage society and their own lives and subsequent stories about the bitterness and despair that descended when needed white support faded as the fad died. There were stories of Great Society program administrators struggling to keep services flowing and then being cut adrift as their programs folded. There were stories about smashed hopes for educational innovation and the impact of those failed promises on black children and the teachers and parents who cared for them. And somehow, the press never quite caught the mood shift as black America heeded John Mitchell's admonition, "Watch what we do."

Paradoxically, while those stories went largely unreported, the results of "affirmative action" were becoming visible at papers around the country. There was beginning to be a sprinkling of blacks in newsrooms, a handful of black columnists and two-count 'em—blacks on editorial boards of papers of general circulation. Were the black newspeople asleep at their typewriters, timid or merely inept?

By and large, the answer was, none of the above. They were usually hindered in their efforts to tell the story of America as they saw it because their work product was filtered through the general racial fantasy locked in the minds of white editors. Part of that fantasy is the belief that the conventional wisdom about race held by enlightened whites—and by the seventies, there were few whites who would not claim that state—bears a strong relationship to reality. Deviations from conventional wisdom are believed to flow from the emotions and limited perceptions which are attributed to blacks in order to turn them into unreliable witnesses.

Black newspeople encountered this obstacle in a variety of forms. Their editors were generally unfamiliar with all but the most noted black experts and resource people. Thus, a whole segment of insight and perception has either been excluded from or devalued in the process of developing information that shapes and informs news judgments. Black writers continually encounter white editors insistent upon reshaping their work and their insights to accord with white preconceptions and values. There are other editors who are just uninterested in any but the most obvious black stories. The experience of blacks writing for white editors is sometimes like pitching a ballgame being called by a cross-eyed umpire.

For all those reasons, the racial story has been covered very badly over the last five years or so and editors now faced with a disturbing statistic and frightening memories have little sense of the grainy reality beneath the surface. Unemployed black youngsters were not a story when harsh urban life and unemployment were destroying their families, when the schools quit on them or when from ineptitude or insensitivity the country's social agencies were battering the spirit out of them. They are becoming a story only when all those failures

(continued on page 23)

Roger Wilkins is a member of the editorial board of *The New York Times*.

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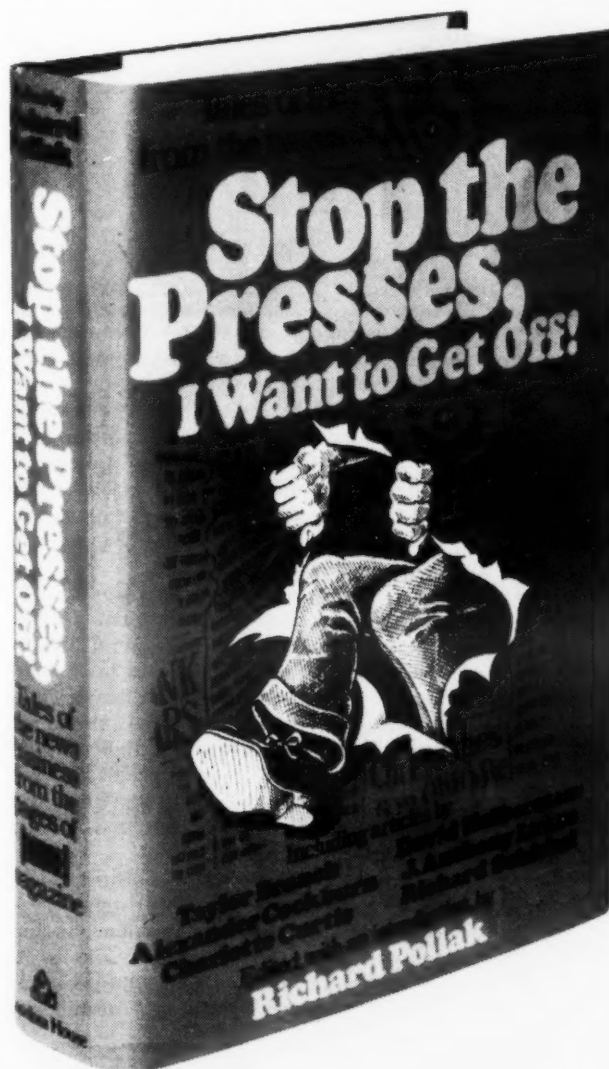
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